Illustrating**Shakespeare**

Practice**Theory**and**the**Digital**Humanities**

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‘…into the silent water…’

David Byrne

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Joseph Edward Goodman.

Summary

The Victorian era was the ‘Golden Age’ for Shakespeare illustration. Between 1839 and 1880 thousands of illustrations were produced within many different editions of Shakespeare’s Complete Works. What is so fascinating about these illustrations is that they have, historically, been widely neglected by academic scholarship. These editions, which were hugely popular in the Victorian era, are a very important part of our cultural heritage and, indeed, our construction of Shakespeare's plays as we understand them today.

The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* is centred on the four major Victorian illustrated editions of Shakespeare's Complete Works and makes available online over 3000 of these illustrations in an open-access database. The archive is available online at 'ShakespeareIllustration.org' and will allow researchers and members of the public to explore a rich image archive and to ask new questions about this material: for example, 'how did the Victorians portray certain characters and plays pictorially and does this portrayal differ throughout the Victorian era?'

Alongside such questions, the archive, more broadly, allows users to explore and interrogate the complex relationship that exists between the page and the stage, between word and image and between the past and the present. Underpinning the project is my strong belief that an online academic resource can be both scholarly rigorous and user-friendly. Further, the archive uses social networking to enable a community of users to discuss the images and to collaborate in exciting new and unforeseen ways.

This thesis explores the implications around the creation of such work.

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Introduction

The**Illustration**Game

> Inside the circle of the game the laws and customs of ordinary life no longer count. We are different and do things differently.
>
> J. Huizinga[1]

> I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans / I will not Reason and Compare: my business is to Create.
>
> William Blake[2]

Intelligent Machinery

In 1950 the mathematician and founder of modern computer science, Alan Turing, wrote a paper for the psychology journal *Mind*.[3] The paper, entitled 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', would become celebrated for

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[1] J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Routledge, 1949), p. 12.
[2] William Blake, 'Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion', in *The Illuminated Blake,* annotated by David V. Erdman (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 289 (10: ll. 21-22).
[3] Alan Turing, 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', *Mind,* 59:236 (Oct. 1950), 433-460.

outlining Turing's ideas about artificial intelligence and influencing generations of scientists working on the subject. Turing began his discussion by proposing in the paper's opening sentence the question 'Can Machines think?' Recognising the slipperiness of language, Turing concedes that to reach an answer he 'should' define what the 'normal use' of the terms 'machine' and 'think' are, but he finds this method of analysis 'absurd' and reductive as 'it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the answer to the question, "Can machines think?" is to be sought in a statistical survey such as a Gallup poll.'[4] Language and its meanings, Turing understands, are highly ambiguous and, for a mathematician like himself, this ambiguity – what the French philosopher Jacques Derrida would later describe as 'undecidability' – is problematic because it does not provide us with scientific certainty: if enough people define 'machine' and 'think' a certain way then, indeed, machines may be able to think.[5] To get around this problem, Turing invents a game.

In 'the imitation game' a man and a woman are placed in a room, while an interrogator (who can be male or female) is placed in another one. The goal of the game is for the interrogator to determine who is the male and who is the female by asking them questions. The roles of the man and the woman are either to help the interrogator make the correct judgment or to cause the interrogator to make the 'wrong identification'.[6] For example, Turing suggests that if the interrogator asks the man for the length of his hair, the man who has been designated the role of hindering the interrogator's decision could

[4] Turing, 'Computer Machinery Intelligence', p. 433.
[5] Jacques Derrida, *Points: Interviews, 1974-1994* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 147.
[6] Turing, 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', p. 434.

answer ‘My hair is shingled, and the longest strands are about nine inches long’, presumably because in the 1950s long hair signified femininity.[7] The answers given to the interrogator and the questions received by the male and the female, Turing states, should ideally be through ‘a teleprinter communicating between the two rooms’ so the interrogator’s judgment is not influenced by their tone of voice. In effect, the answers given to the interrogator are *mediated* by a machine. For humans, playing ‘the imitation game’ makes them more like computers, and, is arguably, analogous to how we interact with each other through the world wide web and other digital networks today.

It is this mediation (the textual inscription of answers to the interrogator’s questions) and the anonymous nature of it, which allows Turing to further develop his enquiry and to re-frame his original question:

> We now ask the question, ‘What will happen when a machine takes the part of A [the man] in this game?’ Will the interrogator decide wrongly as often when the game is played like this as he does when the game is played between a man and a woman? These questions replace our original ‘Can machines think?’[8]

The rest of Turing’s paper is spent with the mathematician considering the implications of the game from a number of different perspectives: from the type of ‘machine’ that should be used (a digital computer, first, because they

[7] Turing, ‘Computing Machinery and Intelligence’, p. 434.
[8] Turing, ‘Computing Machinery and Intelligence’, p. 434.

already existed in 1950, and, second, because all digital machines are equivalent and 'universal') to nine different viewpoints that are opposed to Turing's belief that by the end of the century machines will be able to think: 'I believe that in about fifty years' time it will be possible', Turing argues.[9]

Seventy five years after Turing's famous paper, and despite significant progress in the field of Artificial Intelligence, machines are still nowhere near able to pass 'the imitation game', or what has subsequently been called 'The Turing Test'.[10] What we are beginning to see, however, is a cultural concern and anxiety that instead of computers becoming more like humans, humans are becoming more like machines. This view is most explicitly expressed by Jaron Lanier in his book, *You Are Not A Gadget: A Manifesto*.[11] What concerns Lanier is that through the digital we are losing our individuality and becoming part of the 'hive mind' that is the world wide web. As Lanier forcefully argues in the opening paragraph of the book, 'It's early in the twenty-first century, and that means that these words will mostly be read by nonpersons – automatons or numb mobs composed of people who are no longer acting as individuals.'[12] Lanier, who was one of the pioneering figures of Virtual Reality in the 1980s and early 90s and is thus no Luddite, goes on to argue that when we falsely consider machines to be intelligent it ultimately has a dehumanising effect:

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[9] Turing, 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', p. 442.
[10] Peter J. Bentley, *Digitized: The Science of Computers and How it Shapes our World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 180.
[11] Jaron Lanier, *You Are Not A Gadget: A Manifesto* (London: Allen Lane, 2010).
[12] Lanier, *You Are Not A Gadget: A Manifesto,* p. 1.

> The attribution of intelligence to machines […] obscures more than it illuminates. When people are told that a computer is intelligent, they become prone to changing themselves in order to make the computer appear to work better, instead of demanding that the computer be changed to become more useful.[13]

In a 2011 profile in *The New Yorker* magazine, published after the publication of *You Are Not A Gadget*, Lanier reveals his way of thinking about technology and the consequences of what might arise from it: 'I've always felt that the human-centered approach to computer science leads to more interesting, more exotic, more wild, and more heroic adventures than the machine-supremacy approach, where information is the highest goal.'[14] It is an approach that I have aspired towards in the last few years with the creation of the accompanying digital project to this thesis: *The Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* (*VISA*), available at shakespeareillustration.org. It is an approach, I suggest, that most people working in the digital humanities aim to realise in their own projects and scholarship. The 'human-centered approach' to the digital and, more generally, technology, is exactly what makes the digital *human*ities such an exciting, invigorating and *important* scholarly field.

The digital surrounds us and pervades our daily lives like never before. As Steven E. Jones observes in *The Emergence of the Digital Humanities*, we

[13] Lanier, *You Are Not A Gadget: A Manifesto,* p. 36.
[14] Lanier quoted in Jennifer Kahn 'The Visionary', *The New Yorker* (11 July, 2011) <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/07/11/the-visionary> [accessed on 6 April 2012].

are living in a 'mixed-reality'.[15] Where the digital was once somewhere we would 'go to' ('cyberspace', for example, was accessed by sitting at our desktops at home and 'dialing up' the internet), today the digital is mobile and everywhere. Jones writes that the digital is 'right here all around us, the water in which we swim'.[16] This analogy is reminiscent of a speech that the writer David Foster Wallace gave in 2005:

> There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, 'Morning, boys. How's the water?' And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, 'What the hell is water?'[17]

It is our job as researchers working on the digital not only to ask the question 'how's the water?' but also in certain ways to *make* the water itself (or at least have an influence on its form) and to *critique* it. Wallace's speech ends with the author telling his audience that what is 'real and essential, is hidden in plain sight all around us, all the time', and urges them to become aware of the world around them by continually reminding themselves 'This is water. This is water'.[18] And this is what we should be doing in humanities departments too: the pervasiveness of the digital and how it affects both our personal and

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[15] Stephen E. Jones, *The Emergence of the Digital Humanities* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), p. 26.
[16] Stephen Jones, *The Emergence of the Digital Humanities,* p. 20.
[17] David Foster Wallace, 'This is Water', (May 2005) <http://bulletin.kenyon.edu/x4280.html> [accessed on 6 April 2016].
[18] Wallace, 'This is Water'.

professional lives, how it allows us to communicate with new audiences and how it allows us to create, research, and access scholarship in an unprecedented way, means that we should be trying to *make sense* of this vast digital ocean before we end up drowning in it.

The digital presents us with an opportunity to reimagine scholarship anew and to do things differently. If we are not going to, as Lanier dramatically suggests we might, become a 'numb mob', we need to begin to engage with technology in a much more 'human' way. We need to start applying humanities methodologies to investigate the digital and begin to make things that fulfill the needs of humanities researchers. By investigating the digital in this way, we do not become passive observers of the most significant cultural change since the industrial revolution or get swept along a digital river whose current is increasingly becoming more and more rapid, but, instead, we actively help to shape what the digital is, what it does and *how it means*; the affordances of the digital allow us to not just critique cultural works, but also to create those cultural works themselves. Let us, then, like deep sea divers shining their torches on the darkest corners of the ocean, begin, as humanists, to illuminate the digital. By making, critiquing, understanding and celebrating, we are not just contributing to a new scholarly field but fundamentally creating it as we proceed. Such work will allows us to show, to quote Hamlet, 'the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'.[19]

This introduction will explore how the pervasive digital culture we are

[19] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works,* ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 653-690 (3.2. ll. 23-24). All further references are to this edition of *Hamlet* and line numbers are presented parenthetically in the body of the text.

living in has influenced my doctoral project, *The Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, by investigating ideas including play and the theatre. By understanding the web as a theatrical medium we can begin to produce better digital resources because our awareness becomes heightened to the fact that the web is a public forum (like a theatre). This means that when we create our digital projects they will be designed with an 'audience' in mind. I will then go on to analyse how, in this new digital world, what we understand as 'research' is changing and how that change can bring together new communities of scholars who can discuss and share their work online. I conclude by thinking about remediation and some of the challenges this concept presents us with. Similar challenges about digital technology confronted the band Radiohead in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Everything in its Right Place

In October 2000 (exactly fifty years to the month that Turing published his paper in *Mind* and around the same time the Digital Humanities was becoming established in university departments), the British rock band, Radiohead, released their fourth album, *Kid A*. The album was the highly anticipated follow up to 1997's critically acclaimed *OK Computer* and as such was seen to be *the* cultural event of that autumn. But there was a problem: *Kid A* sounded nothing at all like *OK Computer*. Where *OK Computer* was thematically concerned with pre-millennial anxieties about the speed with which technology was developing and its alienating effects on the individual, *Kid A* saw Radiohead embracing that technology. *OK Computer* used

traditional electric guitars to accompany lead singer Thom Yorke's paranoid falsetto, whilst *Kid A* used electronics to create samples, fragments and loops to provide the musical basis for most of the songs. To many people the album proved a huge disappointment. Mark Beaumont, writing in *Melody Maker*, awarded it 1.5 stars out of 5, describing it as a 'monument of effect over content' and the novelist, Nick Hornby, described it as too demanding.[20] However, it has since been named 'album of the decade' by *Rolling Stone* and the influential music website *Pitchfork*.[21] This challenging piece of work has also gone on to sell over four million copies across the globe.

In hindsight, the reason why *Kid A* has proved so culturally significant is because it represents the world, both lyrically and musically, as a database. In 'Database as a Symbolic Form', Lev Manovich has argued that in the twenty-first century, as the 'world appears to us as an endless and unstructured collection of images, texts, and other data records, it is only appropriate that we will be moved to model it as a database'.[22] This desire to structure the world is one this study will explore later, but for now it is important to note that the opening track from *Kid A* – from this album that seems to resonate with so many – is called *Everything in its Right Place*. The song, like the rest of the album, is about the postmodern condition, about this

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[20] Nick Hornby, 'Beyond the Pale', *The New Yorker* (October 30, 2000) <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2000/10/30/beyond-the-pale-3> [accessed on 6 April 2012].

[21] *Rolling Stone*, '100 Best Albums of the 2000s', <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/100-best-albums-of-the-2000s-20110718/radiohead-kid-a-20110707>; *Pitchfork*, 'The Top 200 Albums of the 2000s: 20-1', <http://pitchfork.com/features/lists-and-guides/7710-the-top-200-albums-of-the-2000s-20-1> [accessed on 6 April 2012].

[22] Lev Manovich, 'Database as a Symbolic Form', *Convergence*, 5:2 (June 1999), 80-99 (p. 81).

need to categorise, how there are no longer any narratives, just sounds and structures. How can we attempt to make sense of the world, it asks, when there is just so much in it? The song begins with a few notes of an electronic keyboard, presumably taken from a database of music samples the band had created in the process of developing the song, before Thom Yorke begins to repeatedly sing the lyric 'everything in its right place'. His voice has been 'treated' electronically and it becomes fractured, fragmented and looped as the song develops. As the music critic Mark Richardson has written, revealingly, 'Radiohead were not only among the first bands to figure out how to use the Internet, but to make their music sound like it'.[23] If Radiohead's music does indeed sound like the Internet, it is because it is based on the same principles the Internet and digital archives are based on: the logic of the *database*.

By using Radiohead as an example, I wish to suggest that by understanding and incorporating into our work, through both theory and practice, wider cultural forms such as the database, we can begin to transform our ways of thinking, generate new ways of meaning, and reach a much wider audience who are receptive to new, exciting, and challenging scholarly work. Scholars working in the humanities are currently in the same position as Radiohead after the success of *OK Computer*: deeply ambivalent (if not downright sceptical) about technology and its promise to challenge and re-imagine the world anew.[24] I argue that it is only by embracing new technology

[23] Mark Richardson, 'Kid A' (October 2, 2009) <http://pitchfork.com/features/lists-and-guides/7710-the-top-200-albums-of-the-2000s-20-1> [accessed 6 April 2016].
[24] See, for example, Daniel Allington, Sarah Brouillette and David Golumbia 'Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A Political History of Digital Humanities', *LA Review of Books* (1 May, 2016)

and new media for knowledge dissemination that the humanities can remain relevant to an increasingly cynical and disinterested public. With our work, and in our own way, we should be attempting to create our own *Kid A*s. This, of course, does not mean that by embracing technological innovation we necessarily become un-critical thinkers about our research and technological zealots. Far from it. By using, exploring, and experimenting with technology, we can recognise certain cultural and ideological implications inherent in the software we use to create our projects, and in those very projects themselves. Making things thus provides us with an opportunity to critique and analyse new cultural forms, providing us with new objects of scholarly inquiry.

The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* (*VISA*) is one such object. It was built and developed after much research into similar online archives, such as *The William Blake Archive, The Rossetti Archive* and *The Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration*, and with the strong belief that an academic audience and the general public are not mutually exclusive.[25] Moreover, it is a critical interrogation into the digital humanities and Manovich's argument that the database/digital archive is *the* cultural form of this new millennium. The archive is centered on the four major Victorian illustrated editions of Shakespeare's Complete Works. These editions, which were hugely popular in the Victorian era, are an important, though forgotten, part of our cultural heritage. Importantly, these editions are only ever available

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<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/neoliberal-tools-archives-political-history-digital-humanities/#!> [accessed on 1 June 2016].

[25] *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Archive* Website <[http://rosettiarchive.org>; *The William Blake Archive* <http://www.blakearchive.org>; Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration <www.dmvi.cf.ac.uk> [accessed 6 April 2016].

to scholars in academic libraries. My archive, then, makes available online over 3000 of these illustrations and allows researchers and members of the public to explore a rich image archive and to ask new questions about this material: for example, how did the Victorians depict certain characters and plays pictorially? How does this portrayal differ throughout the Victorian era? Are particular characters or plays more illustrated than others? Does this signify the popularity or otherwise of these characters or plays? Are there pertinent gender, identity, or colonial implications in these representations?

Alongside such questions, the archive allows users to explore and interrogate the complex relationship that exists between the page and the stage and between word and image. Furthermore, the archive will use social networking to enable a community of users to discuss the images and to collaborate in exciting new and unforeseen ways. The archive has a Creative Commons license and I am very excited to see how people will use my work in the future, either for scholarly purposes or for 'remixing'.[26] Underpinning the project is my strong belief that an online academic resource can be both scholarly rigorous and user-friendly, and, with some imagination and creativity, we can take an 'off-the-shelf' digital platform, like WordPress, and make a digital resource that is innovative, thought provoking and original.

In certain respects, it seems peculiar to be writing this thesis now – theses are usually written as the 'end point' of a project – when this project feels as if it is just beginning. What follows is my analytical account of the theoretical underpinnings and development of the *Victorian Illustrated*

[26] Creative Commons Website <https://creativecommons.org> [accessed on 6 April 2016].

Shakespeare Archive. It is a critical reflection upon a process and intellectual journey I embarked upon about four years ago, and is therefore quite a personal record of that time and the decisions I took in creating the archive. I hope, however, that while the central 'text' of this thesis is the archive itself, this written account can 'stand alone' as a piece of work in its own right as it develops and explores the broader implications surrounding such digital work. Mark Tebeau has described the digital humanities as being 'like jazz in that it is about process, as well as outcome'.[27] This is a perfect description of what this thesis and my work is *about*, but I would like to add that it is also like jazz in the sense that while the central theme, or riff, of this thesis is *VISA* itself, occasionally I depart from that main theme and improvise around it in order to explore some of the broader ideas and concepts that arise from it.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first 'Shakespeare in Bits and Bytes', discusses the creation of the archive. It begins with an examination of digital curation and what curatorial practice means in the digital age. It then goes on to explain the digitisation process and the choices I made in deciding how best to go about digitising the illustrations, and how the use of Adobe's Photoshop can help us to imagine 'new ways' of seeing historical artefacts. This is followed by a discussion of the importance of design and intuitive interfaces in creating a digital resource and my decision to use WordPress as the platform to host *VISA*. I argue that good design is often marginalised in digital projects and that when we create a digital archive we

[27] Mark Tebeau quoted in 'Day of DH: Defining the Digital Humanities', in *Debates in the Digital Humanities,* ed. Matthew K. Gold (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 67-75 (p. 68).

should be aware that design and functionality are intertwined: how an archive generates meaning is dependent on how it allows users to navigate through the archival material. I also argue here that the arrangement and juxtaposition of digital objects can, in themselves, create a strong scholarly argument.

The second chapter, 'The Differance Engine' investigates the theoretical implications of *VISA* and other digital archives by focusing on Derrida's work in *Archive Fever*, suggesting that poststructuralism and psychoanalysis can offer us insights into and help us to understand the very serious challenges the digital presents to us. By investigating Derrida's work alongside that of Sigmund Freud, the Shakespearean scholar Terence Hawkes and the art critic John Berger, this chapter articulates how critical theory can be just as valuable and productively applied to the digital as to the literary.

The final chapter explains how *VISA* can be used for research purposes and how a researcher could potentially use the different features of the archive by exploring how the archive allows us to investigate Victorian visual culture and the 'interpictorial' connections between the illustrations in the archive, and also the relationship between illustration and painting.

Finally, in my conclusion to the thesis, 'OK Digital Archive', I use my own experience from working on *VISA* to propose and advocate a type of digital humanities where theory and practice combine to create a model of research that is interdisciplinary in its scope.

The digital humanities allows us to question and ask humanistic questions of the digital. And, in my view at least, there is a no more pressing

subject to be investigating in academia (or elsewhere) at this moment. It is not, perhaps, the Artificial Intelligence of digital machines that we need to be concerned about, but, instead, we need to explore the implications of the digital in how we construct *our own* intelligence and how we might then use this intelligence to further disseminate knowledge to different audiences. 'Can machines think?' Turing asked. 'Can machines *help us to* think?' I ask in this thesis. Or, to further my enquiry and reframe the question as Turing once did: 'Can working with Victorian Shakespeare illustration and creating a digital archive help us to think through and better understand the value of the digital in a humanities context?' This thesis, unsurprisingly, answers that question in the affirmative, but it is, of course, for the reader of this work to decide if this is the case. In this sense, the reader plays a role analogous to that of the interrogator in Turing's 'imitation game': s/he can decide whether or not, on the evidence presented here and through using the archive itself, the answer to that question is 'yes' or 'no'. It is for this reason that I like to call the overall project that has resulted in *VISA* and this thesis, 'The Illustration Game'.

Like, 'the imitation game', 'the Illustration Game' is also concerned with representation and mimicry, or, the copy. For a computer in 'the imitation game' to prove that it can think it only has to give the *impression* that it can fool humans into believing that they are talking to other humans through imitating human behavior. The danger of the digital archive as a medium is that it tricks us as scholars into believing that the digital images and documents it contains are the 'real' thing, the real material artefacts that exist on the page, when, of course, they are highly mediated digital objects. One of

the significant aspects of *VISA*, as we will see, is that it celebrates this mediation: it announces proudly to its users through juxtaposing images that these objects are the result of a digital *process*. In this way, I hope to make users more critically engaged with what it is they are encountering when they use such archives.

The game, then, is afoot. But, what type of game exists without play? Or, in the case of this project, *plays*? The rest of this introduction focuses on some of the concepts and writers that form the context for my work, such as Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin and their idea of remediation, Brenda Laurel and her understanding of computer interactions as being inherently theatrical and playful and Jerome McGann's work on the *Rossetti Archive*. In short, then, this thesis is the story of how everything came to be in its right place.

Play for Today

Play has pervaded my work on this project. Playfulness is, as James E. Combs writes, 'before all an *attitude*, an orientation to the world''.[28] It is an attitude that I argue should inform our work in academia, as playfulness, according to Patrick Bateson and Paul Patrick Gordon, 'is an important form of behavior that facilitates creativity, and hence innovation.'[29] It is for this reason that I began this thesis with the epigraph taken from J. Huzinga's classic text on the subject of play, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element*

[28] James E. Combs, *Play World: The Emergence of the New Ludenic Age* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2000), p. 1.
[29] Patrick Bateson and Paul Martin, *Play, Playfulness, Creativity and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) p. 1.

in Culture. What Huzinga writes could be taken as the motto for the work we do in digital humanities and, indeed, 'the illustration game' itself: 'Inside the circle of the game the laws and customs of ordinary life no longer count. We are different and do things differently'.[30] The digital humanities *are* different and we do do things differently (certainly in comparison to the more 'traditional' humanities). This very project, for example, consists of not just this textual thesis, but also the accompanying digital archive: my work combines the theoretical and the practical.

Unlike other areas of scholarship, the digital humanities has a vast ludic potential. When Orson Welles first went to Hollywood he described it as 'the biggest electric train set any boy ever had' and this is how I feel when confronted with the possibilities that the digital offers us to better understand our cultural past and to share that understanding through innovative open-access projects.[31] Embracing play as an 'attitude' to our work, allows us to *do things* with texts and images that we might have otherwise been afraid to do. According to Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan, one of the hallmarks of play is its 'improvisational potential': 'The result is that we stumble upon new behaviours, thoughts, strategies, movements, or ways of being. We see things in a different way and have fresh insights.'[32] This improvisatory approach is immensely appealing to me because, as I have already said, quoting Mark Tebeau, the digital humanities is like jazz: it is *about process as well as outcome*.

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[30] J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, p. 12.
[31] Orson Welles quoted in Babak A. Ebrahimain, *The Cinematic Theater* (Toronto and Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 99.
[32] Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan, *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul* (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 18.

One of the digital tools that can, quite literally, help us to see things differently is Adobe's Photoshop. I will discuss Photoshop in more detail in the next chapter, but here I would just like to mention an example of how it can be used for such improvisational play. One afternoon I was idly *playing* around in Photoshop with some of the illustrations I had digitsed earlier that morning. There was no goal to this; I was just enjoying a break from digitsing images. I began to play with various lighting settings, increasing the hue and saturation. And then I 'inverted' the image's colours. This had the effect of changing what was once black in the image to white and vice versa, and it was revelatory, because, there before me on the screen, was what looked like the woodblock from which the illustration had been engraved. It was a strange moment because the last time anyone would have seen this illustration look like this would have been the engraver over one-hundred-and-fifty years ago. The image looked like it would have at its moment of production and, as such, it demonstrated the sheer skill of engraving and how historical illustration itself is a complex mechanical process. Although these 'inverted' images do not currently feature in *VISA,* I have used them with my students to help them better visualise and understand what a woodblock is and how it was used, something that is often very difficult to grasp. This is just one example of how improvisational and playful experimentation can inform our work, but there are many other examples throughout this thesis.

William Blake would have appreciated the great creative potential of digital technology. The artist, poet and printmaker was constantly experimenting with new printing techniques where word and image could be

combined on the same page. 'Illuminated Printing', as he called the most successful of these techniques, was a 'method of Printing both Letter-press and Engraving' which combined the skills of 'the Painter and the Poet'.[33] According to Joseph Viscomi, through the medium of illuminated printing, Blake 'created a multi-media site where poetry, painting, and printmaking came together in ways both original and characteristic of Romanticism's fascination with spontaneity and the idea of the sketch'.[34] It does not take too much imagination, then, to observe that William Blake's printing practice was an eighteenth-century analogue precursor of modern image-manipulation software, such as Photoshop. Furthermore, if we accept Northrop Frye's contention that Blake's work 'not only belongs in a unified scheme but is in accord with a permanent structure of ideas', then we could also make the case that his work is hyper-textual and that Blake is, in fact, creating proto web pages without the technology to effectively 'link' his body of work together. William Blake: artist, poet, printmaker…*web designer*.[35]

It is worth mentioning William Blake because the man and his work have been so important to digital humanities with *The William Blake Archive* and (because of the influence Blake had on Dante Gabriel Rossetti) *The Rossetti Archive* standing as examples of how his work has been used by digital practitioners. The most significant aspect of Blake's work, certainly in relation to my own approach to digital creation, is his philosophy of experimentation. In fact, Blake argues that 'the true method of knowledge is

[33] Joseph Viscomi, 'Illuminated Printing', in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 37–62 (p. 41).
[34] Viscomi, 'Illuminated Printing', p. 42.
[35] Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) p. 14.

experiment'.[36] I would go as far as to suggest that the creation of *any* scholarly work should have an element of experimentation to it. As Anne Burdick *et al.* comment, 'Too often in established cultural discourse, the experimental is absent or hastily erased, the dialogue already so well-established that new approaches are incremental at best.'[37] It is through experimentation that new research questions can be asked about texts and new methods and new knowledges can be discovered. By experimenting with texts through the construction of digital archives, we can better understand the past whilst actively creating the future. What makes digital archives such an important area for scholarship is that they exist at the intersection between past and present, word and image, and theory and practice. These are three binaries that would have been very familiar to William Blake. And they are also three binaries that would be familiar to anyone who has ever worked on a Shakespeare play in the theatre.

In her book, *Computers as Theatre*, Brenda Laurel attempts, through a '*poetics* of human-computer activity', to provide designers of websites (and other interactive media), with 'a conceptual framework and a vocabulary that are strongly focused on human experience.'[38] According to Laurel:

> Buried within us in our deepest playful instincts, and surrounding us in the cultural conventions of theatre, film and narrative are the most profound and intimate sources of knowledge about interactive

[36] William Blake quoted in Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 17.
[37] Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunefeld, Todd Presner and Jeffrey Schnapp, *Digital_Humanities* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012), p. 22.
[38] Brenda Laurel, *Computers as Theatre* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1993), pp. xix; xxi.

> representations. A central task is to bring those resources to the fore and to begin to use them in the design of interactive systems.[39]

In her focus on human experience in relation to digital design, Laurel echoes Lanier when he writes about the importance of the human-centred approach to computer science, and there is also a resonance here of the argument I used above, when discussing Radiohead: how understanding wider cultural movements and forms can help us to create better work. Laurel's central thesis is that computers and interactive design are, fundamentally, theatrical, performative and the latest instance of a medium where audiences can engage meaningfully with representations. Just as, for example, the theatre of Shakespeare (which allowed far more interaction between actors and audience members in the Early Modern period than it does today), provides us with characters and a space (a playhouse) for thinking through complex ideas, so computers, in the twenty-first century, are providing us with that space for thought.[40]

Through creating 'interactive representations' we effectively enter the world of imagination and the 'circle' of game and play that has been described by Huizinga. As Laurel writes:

> The impulse to create interactive representations, as exemplified by human-computer activities, is only the most recent manifestation of the

[39] Laurel, *Computers as Theatre*, p. 21.
[40] See, for example, Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

> age-old desire to make what we imagine palpable – our insatiable need to exercise our intellect, judgment and spirit in contexts, situations, and even personae that are different from our everyday lives.[41]

That impulse is what drove Shakespeare to write thirty-seven plays for the theatre and his 'interactive representations' are, of course, his characters. Shakespeare used the past as a way of understanding the present and the play was the medium in which he could articulate the concerns and anxieties of Elizabethan and Jacobean society in order to connect with his audience. The past and the present clashed on Shakespeare's stage, just like they do in any digital archive that is made up of historical artefacts.

This suggests to me, then, the absolute appropriateness of using Shakespeare illustrations as the focal point of my own project and as a way of investigating the implications surrounding the creation of a digital archive. In many ways, I am using these illustrations as the primary means to think about present day concerns and anxieties we might have, as scholars, about digital technology. Not only that, but if, as Laurel argues, we should understand computers as a technology that is inherently theatrical, then what could be more suitable to reveal this, than 3000 illustrations of Shakespeare's plays? We can even ask the question: are these Victorian Shakespeare editions themselves theatrical? Is there something dramatic and performative about the interaction between word and image in these books? Is the book itself a kind of stage where the illustrator is playing the role of director? My answer to

[41] Laurel, *Computers as Theatre*, p. 30.

all these questions is 'yes' and that is why I call these illustrated editions 'Iconoplays'.

Etymologically, 'icon' means 'image, figure, representation' and this is what the illustrated plays contain: visual representations of Shakespeare's characters and scenes.[42] What I also find appealing about this term is the other meanings that are appropriate for this project: icon can also mean a digital representation of something on a computer screen. In fact, it is the Graphical User Interface (GUI) that differentiates the modern computer in the popular imagination from the old mainframe machines of the first few decades of computing. By visually representing on-screen programmes, documents, and other files, the icon acts as a pictorial synecdoche: a visualisation that stands in for part of a far more complex whole. The Microsoft Word icon, for example, is a simple 'W', but when a user clicks on it the computer will begin to load the vast amounts of computer code that make up that programme. But 'icon' can also mean a 'person or thing worthy of veneration'.[43] And this is how Shakespeare's characters were seen in the Victorian period and in our own: they tell us universal truths about the human condition, we are reminded time and time again.[44] The characters are no longer embedded in the plays they once inhabited but have broken free of the page: their meanings circulate freely within culture and they have become shorthand (just as an icon on a computer screen is a graphical shorthand for an entire computer programme

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[42] *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], 'Icon', <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/90879?redirectedFrom=icon#eid> [accessed 6 April 2016].
[43] *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], 'Icon', <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/90879?redirectedFrom=icon#eid> [accessed 6 April 2016].
[44] See, for example, Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p. 5.

or file) for certain characteristics of human behaviour: a deep thinking male is often described as being like Hamlet; a powerful female politician is like Lady Macbeth; while a jovial old man is seen as being 'Falstaffian'. Shakespeare's characters *are* icons and the Iconoplay is a play about and containing icons. It is also a description of my entire thesis, which is itself a *play*ful digital exploration of Shakespearean icons and their pictorial relationship to each other in a hypermedia environment.

The hypermedia environment I have created with *VISA* is, I hope, intuitive, user-friendly, and, as the next two chapters will demonstrate, at its heart is the philosophy that good digital design is human-orientated. Nothing like it, as far as I am aware of, exists elsewhere on web. It is a unique resource that is at once both scholarly and aimed at a wide audience. As Laurel goes on to argue:

> Designing human-computer experience isn't about building a better desktop. It's about creating imaginary worlds that have a special relationship to reality – worlds in which we can extend, amplify, and enrich our own capacities to think, feel, and act.[45]

In a strange way, I do feel with *VISA* that I have generated a new imaginary world. Before I created this archive it did not exist, and now, obviously, it does. It has its own laws (functionality, navigation, general way of working) and its own consistent visual aesthetic. Importantly, however, I also feel that it

[45] Laurel, *Computers as Theatre*, p. 32.

extends, amplifies and enriches our own capacities to think, feel and act. Certainly, the creation process of the archive, as this thesis will show, has enriched me in all these ways that Laurel describes and I hope the users of *VISA* find it as equally valuable.

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the word VISA is from the 'Modern Latin *charta visa* "verified paper," literally "paper that has been seen," from fem. past participle of Latin *videre* "to see" ... Earlier *visé* (1810), from French past participle of *viser* "to examine, view."'[46] Both readings are appropriate for my archive. *VISA* contains 3000 thousand pieces of 'paper' that have been seen by many people from the Victorian era up until the day that these Shakespeare editions got placed in rare books libraries. The 'paper' has also been seen and 'verified' by me, in my role as digitiser. I have, effectively, verified these illustrations and as a result included them in the archive. Furthermore, 'visa' also means 'to examine, view' and this is *exactly* what I want users of the archive to do: to see and examine images verified by me so that they can then generate new knowledges by using these materials. The theatre is also a place where we go to view things. This analogy, then, places me as a kind of director who has chosen and verified his actors (the illustrations) and given them their roles through tags, categories and metadata. It is possible to envision the digital archive as a new kind of performance space and dramatic environment for the twenty-first century where the work of artists and scholars is slowly converging.

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[46] *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 'VISA', <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=visa> [accessed 6 April 2016].

The idea that a digital archive, especially a *visual* digital archive, is like a theatre helps us better to understand that digital archives are the result of many (often very subjective) decisions that are taken by a 'director' in order to reach an audience, decisions that result in an interaction between user/archive or audience/performer. A digital archive is performative to the extent that it allows this interaction to take place. In this way, using a digital archive is very similar to the play going experience. An audience member enters the theatre with certain expectations: if they are seeing a comedy, they expect to laugh; if they are seeing a tragedy, they expect to be emotionally moved. The same is true when we use a digital archive: we hope that certain expectations will be met and fulfilled. By reconfiguring our understanding of digital archives in this way (as a performance), we begin to de-mythologise them and, effectively, make them more human and more interesting.

If we are going to use an illustration archive of Shakespeare images from the Victorian period, we expect that archive will provide us with just that. But not all digital archives function in the same way. If another person created a rival Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive, that person would emphasise different aspects of their archive and create different user interactions and experiences. We could, quite rightly, I suggest, call it a different production. Just as we could say *King Lear,* as a *text* is a tragedy, we could also say that there are innumerable productions of *King Lear* that may or may not make us cry: the directors, in getting their actors to perform in a certain way, may succeed in interacting with the audience on an emotional level or that interaction may be more intellectual, or both. Just as there are

numerous ways to produce *King Lear*, there are also numerous approaches to produce a digital archive. This thesis explains the approach that I have chosen in the production of *VISA* and it is worth emphasising that it is just one of many that I could have taken. Digital archives are also like the theatre in another respect: they make what was once invisible, visible. As the theatre practitioner Peter Brook writes, using his notion of the 'Holy Theatre': 'I am calling it the Holy Theatre for short, but it could be called The Theatre of the Invisible-Made-Visible: the notion that the stage is a place where the invisible can appear has a deep hold on our thoughts.'[47]

It is because of these interesting parallels to the theatre that I considered calling *VISA The Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Playhouse*. This title corresponds more directly with Shakespeare as a *play*wright; it describes what users can do with the archive (*play* – either through research, or, remixing the images themselves); more significantly, it ties in with the etymological meaning of the word 'theatre' as a 'thing displayed to view'; and it also throws up ideas of construction and architecture (building and making).[48] It also foregrounds the idea of the digital archive as something performative and dynamic (a live experience, where every use is different) and, if, as Manovich has suggested, the database/archive is *the* medium of the twenty-first Century, it links my work back in an interesting way to Shakespeare's theatrical world of the 1590s, where playhouses and theatre were *the* medium of that time. In the end, however, I have decided against

[47] Peter Brook, *The Empty Stage* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 47.
[48] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'Theatre', <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200227?rskey=sF38aX&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 6 April 2016].

calling the archive this (along with other terms like 'edition', 'gallery' and 'collection') first, because I like the resonances of the acronym 'VISA' has – paper viewed, to view – and also because I wanted my work to be recognised academically alongside other digital projects like *The William Blake Archive, The Rossetti Archive* and *The Walt Whitman Archive*. This is important to me because one of the aspects of the digital humanities I enjoy the most, on a personal level, is the sense of community that those working in the field help to promote. By identifying *VISA* as an archive, I hope that it will be seen by others as continuing, extending and being in dialogue with these other important archives that I have mentioned. Moreover, by categorising *VISA* as an archive will allow other scholars to place it within an already established area of digital resources and allow them to explore the differences and similarities between them.

The stage has been set for *VISA* and the curtain has been lifted: the Archive is *live*. The digital is making research more visible than ever before and as such it is changing what research is and how researchers interact with each other.

Digital Research

As I sit here typing this introduction on my own 'Universal Turing Machine', or digital computer, my 'smart' phone has lit up numerous times to indicate that I have received notifications from friends or complete strangers who are either responding to something (a photograph, a link or a comment) that I have posted online, or who are posting something themselves that I might find of

interest. Remarkably, as if to prove my point about the pervasiveness of the digital, one of these notifications is from a friend who has just taken a photograph of herself on top of Pen-y-Fan, the highest mountain peak in South Wales, and shared it on social media. I say 'remarkably' but the point is that this *is no longer remarkable* as we have become so accustomed to being able to access digital networks to send and receive digital information wherever we go and whenever we like. As N. Katherine Hayles notes, 'when my computer goes down or my internet fails, I feel lost, disoriented, unable to work.'[49] The pervasiveness of the digital and its very *liveness* also means that research and our relationship to research has fundamentally changed.

We expect not only to use the web for research (retrieving an article, say) but also to *share* aspects of our own research with our 'friends' or 'followers'. For example, I have just announced on Facebook (which, for me, includes professional colleagues, acquaintances and life-long friends: again, it seems, the digital is blurring the boundaries between groups who would otherwise have very little to do with each other) that 'I am writing my introduction'. It is, perhaps, not the most interesting comment to make, but it did provoke some discussion and effusive encouragement. The digital spaces outside of a traditional academic environment, and by 'traditional academic environment' I include even those digital resources that require a subscription, or are not open-access, provide a place where exciting discussions are allowed to take place and, often, flourish. For digital humanists, one such place is Twitter where there is a large body of people sharing their work either

[49] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), p. 2.

through links to blog posts, resources, or articles and who are taking part in friendly and lively discussions. This openness of the digital humanities community on social media enables scholars (and, indeed the public) to interact and share ideas with each other in a way that is unprecedented.

Last year, for example, I followed HASTAC's 'What is a Dissertation? New Models, Methods, and Media' symposium which was live streamed and live tweeted using the hashtag #remixthediss.[50] This allowed me directly to engage with researchers who are working on dissertations that may or not be considered 'traditional', in a similar way to my own work. The session was a showcase for researchers using innovative new formats to present their scholarship. These formats included websites, SCALAR (an authoring platform), comics and other multimedia. As Cathy N. Davidson, who was the chair of the session, writes:

> Our goal in 'What Is A Dissertation?' (aka: #remixthediss) is to showcase, celebrate, and model what it takes to not only produce an innovative dissertation but how to enact the institutional change required to have one approved by your university. That means knowing institutional rules, having the right mentors, being willing to explain yourself in terms of existing structures, goals, and aspirations and how your work moves those along, etc.[51]

[50] See, Cathy N. Davidson, 'What is a Dissertation? New Models, Methods, Media', (August 28, 2014) <https://www.hastac.org/blogs/cathy-davidson/2014/08/28/what-dissertation-new-models-methods-media> [accessed 6 April 2016].
[51] Ibid.

But it was not just a showcase. The discussion that occurred after the presentations explored the wider questions and implications of such work: 'why does a dissertation have to be presented as a word-processed document?' and 'Surely there are more interesting, rewarding and more valuable ways of presenting our work than in a PDF?)' Not only was it wonderful for me to hear these questions expressed in a public forum because they have been questions I have often asked myself, but also because it was the first time in my doctoral studies that I had come across a group of people at similar stages in their careers who were also using web-based software as a means of knowledge creation. This had a galvanizing effect on me because working on a digital project like *VISA* can be quite isolating, because first, one has to spend a vast amount of time digitising by oneself, second, because such work is so new and different that my friends could not understand what it was I was doing ('I can't believe you haven't written anything yet'). Finally, there was no community of people in my English Literature department in which I could discuss my ideas: my project was not, for example, another thesis that was analysing the importance of Geoffrey of Monmouth for Arthurian literature.

One of the speakers at the session raised the point that doing digital work for a doctoral project meant that effectively you end up doing far more work than if you had decided to do a more traditional thesis. What was revealing about this was that whilst everyone on the panel agreed with this comment, not one of the panelists would have done anything differently. When Davidson asked the speaker did he regret the amount of time he had to

spend learning new skills, he responded 'No! It was the best!' Davidson then said, laughing, 'my sense is that it is harder work, but it is harder work because it is great!'[52]

Likewise, I too would not have done anything differently in terms of learning new skills for my project. Working on *VISA* has meant that I am now an expert on Digitisation, Photoshop, WordPress and have obtained highly important design skills that have been utilised for various other projects including an RA post on the AHRC-funded *Lost Visions* project, an RA and web designer on Dr. Becky Munford's *Women in Trousers* project, an RA and web designer on Professor Martin Willis' Medical Humanities project *Visualising Seizures*, an RA and Advisory Board member on the new Wellcome Trust-funded Science Humanities initiative and my current position as RA on Cardiff University's new Digital Humanities Network. I have also designed the promotional material for the British Association of Romantic Studies and British Association of Victorian Studies conferences.

But what exactly *is* the digital humanities? To even ask the question is often enough to elicit groans of dismay from 'DHers', ground down by friends or colleagues who are deeply curious, concerned or sceptical about what it is we are spending our time doing. Significantly, however, in the past eighteen months or so I have been asked the question far less frequently, which is perhaps an indication that the digital humanities is becoming more widely understood and established in institutions. My own University, Cardiff, and the

[52] The live stream of the event is available at <https://www.hastac.org/blogs/cathy-davidson/2014/08/28/what-dissertation-new-models-methods-media> [accessed 6 April 2016].

Centre in which I am based in (the Centre of Editorial and Intertextual Research) has, in the past couple of years, seen many exciting projects 'go live' and it is perhaps this visibility that is making 'what we do' more understandable to traditional academic audiences. The question is a pertinent one since it is given a prestigious position as the unifying theme of Part I in Matthew K. Gold's edited collection *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (2012) and it is worth quoting Amanda French's response when asked to define 'DH':

> I don't: I'm sick of trying to define it. When forced to, I'll make the referent the people instead of the ideas or methods – Digital Humanities is the thing practiced by people who self-identify as Digital Humanists. It's helpful to have a name for the field chiefly for institutional authority. Though granted I think it does involve coding/making/building/doing things with computers, things related to, you know, the humanities.[53]

French's answer is interesting because, aside from her exasperation, it understands DH as both something that is practical: 'coding/making/building/doing things with computers' and institutional: it gives 'authority'. Matthew Kirschenbaum, however combines both these readings when he defines DH as 'a term of tactical convenience'. DH can be used for doing things at an institutional level itself, arguing that DH is 'tactical' 'is to

[53] Amanda French quoted in 'Day of DH: Defining the Digital Humanities', in *Debates in the Digital Humanities,* ed. Matthew K. Gold (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 67-75 (p. 70).

insist on the reality of circumstances in which it is unabashedly deployed to get things done – "things" that might include getting a faculty line or funding a staff position, establishing a curriculum, revamping a lab or launching a center'.[54] What is so appealing about Kirschenbaum's interpretation is that it applies what we do with our digital work – making and doing – to the larger scale institution of the university itself.

I have already mentioned that one of my favourite definitions of DH is by Mark Tebeau when he defines DH as being like 'jazz in that it is about process, as well as outcome.' Another favourite definition is from the 'Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0', where the authors write that:

> Digital Humanities is not a unified field but **an array of convergent practices** that explore a universe in which: a) print is no longer the exclusive or the normative medium in which knowledge is produced and/or disseminated; instead, print finds itself absorbed into new, multimedia configurations; and b) digital tools, techniques, and media have altered the production and dissemination of knowledge in the arts, human and social sciences. The Digital Humanities seeks to play an inaugural role with respect to a world in which, no longer the sole producers, stewards, and disseminators of knowledge or culture, universities are called upon to shape natively digital models of scholarly discourse for the newly emergent public spheres of the present era (the www, the blogosphere, digital libraries, etc.), to model

[54] Matthew Kirschenbaum, 'Digital Humanities As/Is a Tactical Term', in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 415-428 (p. 415).

> excellence and innovation in these domains, and to facilitate the formation of networks of knowledge production, exchange, and dissemination that are, at once, global and local.

They go on to write that the Digital Humanities:

> **by emphasizing design, multimediality, and the experiential […] seeks to expand the compass of the affective range to which scholarship can aspire**. As such it gladly flirts with the scandal of entertainment as scholarship, scholarship as entertainment. It respectfully resists the notion that scholarship speaks outside of time, space, and the physicality of the human body. It is actively engaged in the task of creating an audience –*even a mass audience*—for humanistic learning.[55]

All of these points, as this thesis will go on to demonstrate, I concur with. However, it is also important to remember that whilst the DH community are doing important and interesting work, not everyone in the academic world understands what and why we do what we do.

Remediation

'As an historian I'm rather unhappy about what you are doing'. This remark, directed at the paper I had just given at the Sheffield Digital Humanities

[55] 'Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0', <http://www.humanitiesblast.com/manifesto/Manifesto_V2.pdf> [accessed on 6 April 2016].

Congress in 2012, is, on the face of it, not particularly encouraging.[56] My paper, entitled 'Art to Enchant: The Creation of a Digital Archive', explored in detail my process and methodology in the creation of the *VISA*. What particularly irritated this member of the audience was my demonstration of the procedures I use to 'clean up' the images in the archive and my subsequent assertion that when we digitise an historical artefact it becomes translated - *adapted* - into a different medium, thus creating an entirely new digital object. The audience member took great exception to my paper because it called into question his deeply held belief that we can know history as an objective fact, that the books, documents, and images we find in libraries and archives are *transparent* texts, that they reveal to us truths and give us direct access to their own historical eras. Implicit within the historian's response is one which also calls into question his own occupation as an historian: if the public can access the historical record, as they can with *VISA* (in previous decades this idea of access and who has access to what would have only been granted to members of 'The Academy'), then the public have the power to interpret that historical record. It is this concept of interpretation and who is allowed to interpret (and *what* they are allowed to interpret), that is the cause of much unease surrounding the Digital Humanities. For over thirty years we have been living in an intellectual environment dominated by Stephen Greenblatt's famous aphorism 'I began with a desire to speak to the dead'.[57] It is about time, as Terence Hawkes has noted, given the current state of academic

[56] 'Digital Humanities Congress 2012', <http://www.shef.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.209115!/file/dhc-abstracts.pdf> [accessed on 6 April 2016].
[57] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Renaissance Energy in Renaissance England* (California: University of California Press), p. 1.

publishing and the public perception of the humanities, that we started to speak to the living.[58]

The writer who has been fundamental in theorising this desire to speak with the living is Jay David Bolter. In *Writing Space*, and with Richard Grusin in *Remediation*, Bolter discusses the process through which new media, in an attempt to gain cultural significance and thus credibility, refashion older forms of media.[59] This is exactly what the Victorians did with wood engraving and with Shakespeare: by taking a technology, such as wood engraving, and applying it to a culturally significant text, in this case *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Through this process of *remediation*, wood engraving gains a certain amount of cultural capital that, in turn, makes it a socially acceptable technology. Bolter and Grusin use broader examples than this. For example, throughout the book they discuss how film remediates the theatre and photography, how photography remediated painting, and how television remediated the theatre and radio. What is so interesting, however, especially for our purposes here, is the crucial role Shakespeare has played in all these processes of remediation. Since the invention of photography in the 1840s, photographers have sought to capture Shakespeare performances on stage. One of the earliest films is Herbert Beerbohlm Tree's *King John*, and when the BBC first started broadcasting in 1936, Shakespeare, according to the British Film Institute, was 'often on the menu, to give the new medium a veneer of

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[58] Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 4.
[59] Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext and the Remediation of Print* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001); Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000).

respectability.'[60] In the next couple of years we shall see the same process happening again with Virtual Reality where the works of Shakespeare will be remediated into a new technological environment to give that medium cultural validation. Shakespeare, it seems, is always at the forefront of remediation, and, perhaps, ironically, speaking to the living.

For Bolter and Gruisin, the process of remediation exists in two forms that they describe as a 'double-logic'.[61] They argue, convincingly, that remediation is a defining characteristic of new media and that when new media refashions older media it does so with either the 'logic' of transparent immediacy or hypermediacy. Transparent immediacy is the 'logic' or strategy that the audience member at the Sheffield conference wanted to see displayed in the demonstration of my archive. It is the very human desire to see objects of representation as unmediated and for the viewer to feel as if they are in the presence of those objects themselves. Media that exemplify this strategy include perspective painting, photography and mainstream film. What these media all have in common is their claim to represent the 'real' and thus to offer the viewer a more 'authentic' unmediated experience. For example, a painting using linear perspective very rarely, if ever, calls attention to the canvas it is painted on, or its frame, as to do so would make us aware that what we are looking at is a representation. *VISA* was too obviously mediated for the historian in the audience: the illustrations and the design of the archive, as we will see later, were too heavily treated. The historian ideally

[60] 'Shakespeare on Television', <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/527139/> [accessed on 6 April 2016].
[61] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, p. 5.

wanted, as Bolter and Gruisin write, 'The digital medium […] to erase itself, so that the viewer stands in the same relationship to the content as she would if confronting the original medium.'[62] This encounter with the original medium would then, presumably, offer the historian an acceptable position from which he could pass 'objective' judgement on the content.

Yet this erasure and encounter is surely impossible because, whether we like it or not, digital media is *hypermediated*. This second of the two 'logics' of remediation privileges 'images, sound, text, animation and video, which can be brought together in any combination. It is a medium that offers "random access"; it has no physical beginning, middle, or end'.[63] Moreover:

> hypermediacy acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible. Where immediacy suggests a unified visual space, contemporary hypermediacy offers a heterogeneous space, in which representation is conceived of not as a window on to the world, but rather as 'windowed' itself – with windows that open on to other representations or other media.[64]

The hypermediated style, however, is not just a digital phenomenon. Whilst its most obvious manifestation is the world wide web, hypermediacy can be seen throughout history: the twentieth-century artistic movements such as Cubism, Dadaism, Pop Art and Collage, for example, all embrace viewpoints and

[62] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, p. 45.
[63] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, p. 31.
[64] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, p. 33.

strategies that are multiple. As opposed to representing the world as a unified whole, these movements are more concerned with, and meditate upon, their own modes of representation. They make us aware that what we are looking at is a construction. Richard Lanham, in his book *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts*, has even described collage as 'the central technique of twentieth-century visual art'.[65] If this is so, then it should be no surprise that fundamental to the success of the desktop computer has been the ability to 'cut' and 'paste' words and images and to place them in new contexts and recombine them in new ways. In effect, the capacity for computers to take information, whether this is words, images, sounds or video, and to store that information in random access memory, ready for retrieval at any moment and in any context, means that anyone who has ever used a computer is an effective collagist. The world appears to us as fragments of texts and images, because, in a very real practical way, we make it so. A computer *remediates*.

However, like the interplay we see between word and image in relation to illustration, what makes remediation a fascinating critical practice is that these two logics – transparency and hypermediacy – exist in a symbiotic relationship with each other: 'new digital media oscillate between immediacy and hypermediacy, between transparency and opacity', observe Bolter and Gruisin.[66] Viewing a digital image on screen is a very different experience from viewing that image in an art gallery or on the page, but just because a historical digitised object exists in a hypermediated space does not mean that

[65] Richard Lanham quoted in Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, p. 39.
[66] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, p. 19.

that object bears no relation to the original object. It is this tension between original and copy, between the past and the present, between transparent and hypermediated spaces, which is the cause of so much anxiety concerning digital archival work. But it is precisely because this work creates these anxieties and challenges deeply held cultural assumptions that makes it so worthwhile.

Given the clarity with which Bolter and Grusin argue their case for remediation, it is surprising how often critics and practitioners have misinterpreted what they are saying. I paraphrase here, but the Victorian scholar Kathryn Sutherland, at a conference in Durham in 2012, went as far as to assert 'for the past ten years all I have heard is remediation. I am fed up of remediation. Putting things on a computer is not interesting. In many ways the world wide web has taken away much of what was interesting with electronic literature that was happening back in the 90's with CD-ROMS.'[67] Sutherland, like many others, seems to conflate the idea of remediation with simple digitisation.

Bolter and Grusin's main point, however, and it is one explored further in Bolter's essay, 'Critical Theory and the Challenge of New Media', is that we *embrace* the potential of the digital medium whilst being aware of how a material object itself such as a book makes meaning.[68] Instead of thinking about the web as a simulacrum for various kinds of historical texts and documents, we instead begin to think of the web as an environment in which

[67] Details of the conference are available at <https://formsofinnovation.wordpress.com> [accessed on 6 April 2016].
[68] Jay David Bolter, 'Critical Theory and the Challenge of New Media', in *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age of New Media*, eds. Mary E. Hocks and Michelle R. Kendrick (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 19-36.

these artefacts have undergone, to quote Shakespeare, 'a sea-change/Into something rich and strange.' (*The Tempest* Act I. Sc. II, 403-404). In short, instead of trying to create an environment where the digitised artefacts are trying to be transparent reflections of their 'real-world' counterparts, we embrace remediation, as a heightened awareness of the medium itself and the advantages that that medium can bestow upon these texts. Institutionally, within universities, libraries, galleries and museums and within work done in the Digital Humanities itself, we are still conceptualising our digital work in relation to print. There is an institutional reluctance, I suggest, prompted by the long dark shadow of print technology, fully to explore hypermediacy and digital experimentation, the implications and potential of digital artefacts and technology, and the positive contribution the web can make intellectually and socially in helping us better understand them. It is this reluctance to explore the full potential of the digital that Kathryn Sutherland finds so frustrating. This reluctance and frustration – which I share with Sutherland – is one I have sought to rectify in the creation of *VISA* and it is this rectification, or intervention, that *VISA* makes into the Print/Digital debate that so 'horrified' the delegate at the Sheffield conference.

Crucial to this debate is the work of Jerome McGann. Back in 2001 McGann published *Radiant Textuality*: *Literature after the World Wide Web*.[69] The book, a reflective account of his experience working on *The Rossetti Archive* and an investigation into the differences between 'the computer and the book', is hugely insightful both as an historical document (it is fascinating

[69] Jerome McGann, *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

to read his trials and tribulations in the establishment of his archive) and as an example of how little progress has been made in the intervening fourteen years with regards to incorporating and making sense of the digital within an academic environment. In the preface to the book, and to underline the significance of what he is saying, he uses italics: '*the general field of humanities education and scholarship will not take the use of digital technology seriously until one demonstrates how its tools improve the ways we explore and explain aesthetic works – until, that is, they expand our interpretational procedures*.'[70] Furthermore, McGann acknowledges how the digital work done within the humanities 'rarely engages those questions about interpretation and self-aware reflection that are the central concerns for most humanities scholars and educators.'[71] The challenge, then, for digital humanists, and one that Kathryn Sutherland would surely concur with, is to create original digital projects that helps us better to understand textuality, and our 'cultural inheritance', through a constant process of reflecting upon and *critiquing* that work.

Radiant Textuality has had a significant impact on my own project. Not only has it helped me to understand the complex relationship between print and electronic texts more fully, but it has also legitimated and intellectually affirmed my own work with *VISA*. Undertaking a doctoral project within an emerging disciplinary field that is so fundamentally different from one's peers has meant that I have often questioned the scholarly validity of my work. In hindsight, this was less to do with the project itself and more to do with my

[70] McGann, *Radiant Textuality*, p. xii.
[71] McGann, *Radiant Textuality*, p. xii.

difficulties in finding an appropriate methodology that would allow me to explore, in a scholarly way, the implications of it. Writing just a couple of years after Bolter and Grusin, McGann challenges us to see print as a technology in its own right. This understanding made me appreciate the complexities of print in a more sophisticated way than I had previously and it legitimated my approach with my own archive.

When one creates a digital archive one is constantly switching between the different roles of curator, designer, historian and theorist and it is of vital importance to be able to communicate how each of these different roles operates in the creation of a digital resource such as *VISA* or *The Rossetti Archive*, for the simple reason that these projects are still the rarity in academia and the knowledge gained from working on a digital archive could have a very practical benefit for someone thinking about similar work in the future. McGann's account in *Radiant Textuality* has given me not so much a model to work from, as the confidence to embrace my own curiousity and to direct my own intellectual pathway: it has allowed me to see that the originality of the project, far from lacking academic legitimacy, is actually what makes the project so compelling.

Julia Thomas endorses the scholarly significance of digital archive creation in an article published in a special issue of the *Journal of Victorian Culture* dedicated to how digital technology is changing the nature of research. Thomas argues that:

Such archives, even in their incipient stages, constantly deal with

> critical and theoretical questions, whether these are questions of an editorial nature, or questions of how to anticipate the user's needs and requirements.…The construction of the digital archive, I would argue, is as much a scholarly resource and activity as the end product. By ignoring the research potential of digitisation, we ignore its theoretical and cultural suppositions and assumptions.[72]

The creation of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* was undertaken as an experimental venture through which to explore and better understand Victorian visual culture. What I could not foresee at the time was just how those decisions that were taken in the incipient stages of my own project, and through the process of 'augmenting' materials through 'critical study and transformation' that McGann has written about, would ultimately lead me to question widely held assumptions that have formed the basis of humanities research for the past century such as the primacy of the monograph as the gold standard for knowledge dissemination.[73] Alongside more traditional research outputs, like the monograph, we should also consider projects like digital archives with the similar academic acknowledgements and prestige.

Alan Turing concluded his paper, 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence,' by saying, 'We can only see a short distance ahead, but we can see plenty there that needs to be done'.[74] *VISA* is my small contribution to the foreseeable future – the short distance ahead. I hope it provides a good view.

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[72] Julia Thomas, 'Digital Transformations', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 13.1 (2008), 101-107 (p. 106).
[73] Jerome McGann, 'The Future is Digital', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 13.1 (2008), 80-88 (p. 86).
[74] Turing, 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', p. 460.

1

Shakespeare**in**Bits**and**Bytes

> From a single image that represents the 'cultural unit' of a previous period, we move to a database of images.[1]
>
> Lev Manovich

> we can exploit the virtual to make the past operational. At the same time, we are able to see more clearly the era's own immersion in virtuality, both optical and textual, as a result of its own novel technologies and networks.[2]
>
> Andrew Stauffer

New Contexts

If you walk halfway down Queen Street in Cardiff city centre, you will find a very peculiar restaurant. According to one reviewer on the 'testimonials' section of their rather antiquated website, 'Pillars Restaurant & Coffee Shop'

[1] Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), p. 291.
[2] Andrew Stauffer, 'Introduction', in *Virtual Victorians: Networks, Connections, Technologies*, eds. Veronica Alfano and Andrew Stauffer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1-8 (p.1).

has 'been open for at east (sic) 30 years and never changes. *Thankfully*'.[3] But this reluctance to move with the times is not the strangest aspect about this curious establishment. 'Pillars Restaurant and Coffee Shop' announces its presence to unsuspecting shoppers of the Welsh capital in neon green lettering written upon a glass canopy unceremoniously wedged in-between The Principality and Lloyds Bank that extends out into in the street by a few metres. If the aforementioned unsuspecting shoppers wish to explore further and actually go into 'Pillars' (as surely he or she would), they will walk underneath the canopy, through a narrow door and down two flights of stairs whereby they will find themselves teleported back in time to the early 1980s and a vast subterranean world of cheap and cheerful dining. When one first enters 'Pillars' the sheer scale of the place is overwhelming: it is massive. Like the universe, it seems to extend in all directions at once. As your eyes become accustomed to the artificial light, you will observe that the décor is reminiscent of a 1980s Spanish hotel run by British ex-pats: it is all bright yellow and faux palm trees, the exact sort of place you would enjoy a hearty breakfast before going on to spend the day at the beach or Club Tropicana. And then, just as you feel that your visual (and, perhaps, spatial) senses can take no more, you begin to notice some of the pictures hanging on the wall, which is when you realise that you have truly fallen down the rabbit hole. For there, decorating the walls of 'Pillars Restaurant & Coffee Shop', are

[3] 'Pillars Restaurant & Coffee Shop Testimonials' Page <http://pillars-restaurant.co.uk/testimonials.html> [accessed on 12 April 2016].

illustrated scenes of Shakespeare taken from the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery.[4]

What could be the reason for this? Are the owners of 'Pillars' appropriating and using Shakespeare's unique cultural capital as a way of providing this most bizarre of restaurants with a kind of artistic validity? Or is it more to do with nationalism? 'Do not worry', the owners seem to be saying, 'it may feel like you are at a holiday resort in Spain, but please take comfort in the various scenes from Shakespeare looking down at you while you eat your eggs and bacon'. Is 'Pillars' using these images to reinforce the idea that the restaurant itself, which, let us remember, *has not changed in thirty years*, is, like the Bard, not for an age but for all time? Even the name, 'Pillars', implies a kind of monolithic permanence: when the rest of Queen Street has become buried in the sand, Ozymandias-like, 'Pillars' shall still stand like the Great Pyramid of Giza, while future archaeologists will look on this mighty work, despair and ask 'why?'[5] The importance of these images to 'Pillars's' construction of itself is even demonstrated in the restaurant's 'logo' on its web page: behind the name 'Pillars' is a rather blurry image of a Shakespeare character sat on a throne (the image is too pixelated to make out which illustration it actually is). To try and understand 'Pillars' and its abundance of clashing signifiers would take up an entire thesis, but the reason I mention it

[4] The Boydell Shakespeare Gallery was a business venture set up by the publisher John Boydell in 1789. The aim of the project was to establish a national school of painting by commissioning British painters to paint a scene from one of Shakespeare's plays. Although initially successful in the 1790s, by the early part of the nineteenth century the Gallery had become a commercial failure, see, Stuart Sillars, *Painting Shakespeare: The Artist as Critic, 1720–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 254-300.

[5] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias', in *Shelley: Poetical Works* ed. Thomas Hutchinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 550 (l.11).

here is because it provides a perfect example of the ways in which an experience of a work of art changes its meaning: *how an artwork creates meaning is determined by its context*. The Boydell Shakespeare Illustrations in 'Pillars' do not just affect our experience of the restaurant. 'Pillars', the restaurant itself, affects the way we understand and experience the illustrations.

In her essay, 'A Way of Seeing', the art historian Svetlana Alpers writes about what she calls 'the museum effect' whereby objects (such as Greek statues) are taken from other cultures and presented in museums.[6] The museum effect, Alpers writes, is 'the tendency to isolate something from its world, to offer it up for attentive looking and thus to transform it into art like our own'.[7] It is through the museum effect, Alpers argues, that Greek sculpture has 'assumed such a lasting place in our visual culture.'[8] The museum invites us to look – it is 'a way of seeing'.[9] However, simply placing an object in a museum does not mean that the object then provides a viewer with the best viewing experience. As Alpers goes on, we need to 'Free viewers, in other words, and make them less intimidated about looking.' How can this be achieved? By a better understanding of space and the viewer's relationship to it:

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[6] Svetlana Alpers, 'A Way of Seeing', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 25-32 (pp. 26-27).
[7] Alpers, 'A Way of Seeing', p. 27.
[8] Alpers, 'A Way of Seeing', p. 26.
[9] Alpers, 'A Way of Seeing', p. 31.

> The way a picture or object is hung or placed – its frame or support, its position relative to the viewer (is it high, low, or on a level? Can it be walked around or not? Can it be touched? Can one sit and view it or must one stand?), the light on it (does one want constant light? Focused or diffuse? Should one let natural light and dark play on it and let the light change throughout the day and with the seasons?), and the other objects it is placed with and so compared to – all of these affect how we look and what we see.[10]

Crucially, the questions that Alpers poses, are just as significant when it comes to designing a digital archive as they are when it comes to exhibiting a piece of work in a museum: the way the images in a digital archive are juxtaposed with each other, how easy it is to access these images, the precedence the images are given in the archive, and how a user can navigate through the archive, all play an important role in how the viewers/users will respond to the archive itself and their overall experience within it. In essence, then, the first step in creating a digital archive that will, hopefully, 'free viewers' is to start thinking like a curator.

According to David Balzer in his book *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else*, the 'most powerful curator' working in the world today is Hans Ulrich Obrist.[11] Obrist is the Co-director of Exhibitions Programmes and Director of International Projects at London's Serpentine

[10] Alpers, 'A Way of Seeing', p. 31.
[11] David Balzer, *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), p. 21.

Gallery and has been described, by Balzer, as 'as close to a rock star as a curator can be'.[12] Obrist, however, is not just a curator but is also a theorist and historian of curating itself. In his book *Ways of Curating,* Obrist provides a useful definition of what it means to 'make a collection', or, as I tend to read it, about how curating (and designing a digital archive) is about *producing knowledge*:

> To make a collection is to find, acquire, organize and store items, whether in a room, a house, library, a museum or a warehouse. It is also, inevitably, a way of thinking about the world – the connections and principles that produce a collection contain assumptions, juxtapositions, findings, experimental possibilities and associations. Collection-making, you could say, is a method of producing knowledge.[13]

Digital archives are a new medium for producing knowledge. Not only do they allow new research questions to be asked of their content (Victorian Shakespeare illustrations, for example), but their very creation allows us to gain new insights into books, materials, and digital cultures. As Jerome McGann notes, the digitisation process allows us to engage directly and in a very practical way with primary material, and by working with hypertext opens up new 'interpretive opportunities'.[14] For example, handling and digitising the

[12] Balzer, *Curationism,* p. 13.
[13] Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Ways of Curating* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 39.
[14] McGann, *Radiant Textuality*, p. 140.

illustrated Victorian Shakespeare editions day after day meant that I became acutely aware of how devices such as illustration, the placement of the text within the page and the texture of the paper construct meaning.

Obrist goes on to write that 'We are already starting to witness visionary acts of digital curating, and curating will surely change as a generation native to digital tools begins to develop new formats'.[15] Frustratingly, Obrist does not give any examples of what these visionary acts of digital curating might be, but we can perhaps infer from his attitude to curation elsewhere what the characteristics of 'visionary acts of curation' might consist of. In an earlier chapter, Obrist writes of his frustration that:

> One often finds oneself in exhibition formats that are a bit too fixed, lacking innovation in either a spatial or temporal dimension. As such, one must ceaselessly question these conventions and change the rules of the game.[16]

Ceaselessly question these conventions and change the rules of the game. The digital, more than any other medium, I argue, allows us constantly to change the rules of the game. It allows us to do things *differently*.

As impressive as *The William Blake Archive* and *The Rossetti Archive* are, for example, they are very much academic resources aimed at a specialist audience. They make us, in the words of Alpers, feel 'intimidated about looking'. It has always struck me as rather incongruous that when we

[15] Obrist, *Ways of Curating*, p. 171.
[16] Obrist, *Ways of Curating*, p. 168.

visit either site (both of which are, obviously, about images) we are greeted by a large quantity of textual information. It is as if the curators and designers of the archives are saying to the viewer/user 'we do not trust you to look'. As such, navigating both sites is arduous at best and downright malevolent at worst. *The Victorian Shakespeare Illustrated Archive* was designed and curated as a response to such a way of creating a digital academic resource. It actively encourages the user to be 'free' to look, to be playful, to remix, and to recognise the mediation that has taken place in bringing the illustrations from page to screen. It celebrates, to quote Walter Benjamin, 'that the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility.'[17] N. Katherine Hayles, finds it problematic how the *The William Blake Archive* is deeply concerned with 'the simulation of visual accuracy' and asks 'if slight color variations affect meaning, how much more does the reader's navigation of the complex functionalities of this site affect what the texts signify?'[18] She answers her question with a brilliant admonishment of the site by arguing:

> Concentrating only on how the material differences of *print* texts affect meaning, as does the William Blake Archive, is like feeling slight texture differences on an elephant's tail while ignoring the ways in which the tail differs from the rest of the elephant.[19]

By contrast, *VISA* celebrates and is unapologetic for its digital condition.

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[17] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 211-244 (p. 218).
[18] N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 90-91.
[19] Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer,* p. 91.

This chapter, then, discusses how *VISA* came into being: it is an account of the creation of the archive, but also, significantly, it uses that creation process as a springboard to think through and investigate some of the implications around such digital work. This chapter documents my attempts to 'free viewers' and to create new ways of seeing. It begins by arguing for the historical importance of Shakespeare illustration to a Victorian audience and how wood engraving should be considered the new media of that period. By exploring the pertinent similarities between the visual culture of the Victorians and the digital culture of the twenty-first century, I go on to suggest that the most compelling medium we have today to investigate this pictorial history is the digital archive. The discussion then develops to detail the significance of the digitisation process and of Photoshop in helping us to create such archives and how the digital images that make up *VISA* came into being. The central section of this chapter advocates an interdisciplinary approach to creating digital resources. By using the philosophies of the designers Dieter Rams and Jonathan Ive, I propose that, as digital humanists, we can learn a tremendous amount about creating resources by incorporating into our projects ideas taken from other disciplines. Rams and Ive's work can be characterised as being a potent combination of functionality and beautiful design, where the philosophy of simplicity is the key to achieving such iconic products as the iPod. The remainder of this chapter discusses how I went about trying to achieve this aim of simplicity for *VISA* by exploring different web platforms before deciding upon WordPress. I conclude by thinking about how digital technology has shifted in the past twenty-five years from a read-

only culture (as exemplified by Microsoft's Encarta), to a read-write one where anyone can now create their own digital resources.[20] Ultimately, I hope, this work will change the way we view digital archives and Victorian Shakespeare illustration in a similar way to how, for better or worse, 'Pillars Restaurant & Coffee Shop' challenges us to view the Boydell Shakespeare illustrations. New contexts create new ways of meaning, and, perhaps, allow us to change the rules of the game. The digital is, without doubt, a game-changer. Let us begin by learning to play again.

Old New Media

In the Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0 the authors write that the digital humanities:

> recasts **the scholar as curator and the curator as scholar**, and, in so doing, sets out both to reinvigorate scholarly practice by means of an expanded set of possibilities and demands, and to renew the scholarly mission of museums, libraries, and archives.[21]

It is an observation echoed by Ann Burdick and the co-authors of *Digital_Humanities*:

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[20] *Encarta* (Seattle: Microsoft, 1993) [CD-ROM].
[21] 'Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0' <http://www.humanitiesblast.com/manifesto/Manifesto_V2.pdf> [accessed 6 April 2016].

> Collection-building and curation have remained constants of humanistic knowledge production from remote antiquity […] to late 19th Century universities where chairs were typically associated with research collections. These domains became disjointed from the mainstream of scholarly practice only during the late print era, and are once again becoming integral to many forms of Digital Humanities practice.[22]

My own form of digital curation and attempt to 'reinvigorate scholarly practice', began a few years ago and was a natural evolution from my original PhD topic. When I was exploring potential PhD ideas, I decided that I wanted to work on Shakespeare illustration by combining my life-long passion for Shakespeare (my background is in Drama) with my favourite module that I had took for my MA: Victorian Visual Cultures. Led by my supervisor, Julia Thomas, Victorian Visual Cultures opened my eyes to a world of illustrations, prints and paintings that I found fascinating. Moreover, it was a new way of understanding culture: through images as opposed to words and for the first time I began to appreciate and understand the significance that the visual has played in literary history. For example, we can only begin to understand how William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* or the works of Charles Dickens impacted and commented upon Victorian society when we analyse them as bi-medial texts, that is, as works that contain both word and image in a of 'complex interaction' that generate meanings.[23]

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[22] Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunefeld, Todd Presner and Jeffrey Schnapp, *Digital_Humanities* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012), p. 32.
[23] Julia Thomas and David Skilton, 'Editorial', *Journal of Illustration Studies* (Dec 2007) <http://jois.uia.no/articles.php?article=42> [accessed 6 Jan 2016].

In fact, such was the importance of images, especially wood engraved illustrations, during the Victorian period that Brian Maidment compares them to the 'use of the photograph in contemporary society'.[24] Developed around the late 1780s by Thomas Bewick, wood engraving allowed artists to create images with a high level of sophistication that could be reproduced easily and cheaply. Because the wood used to engrave the images was usually boxwood it was very durable and the wood blocks could be set alongside type in the printing press which allowed for word and image to be combined on a single page.[25] As Maidment notes, 'Wood engraving vastly extended the possibility of integrating text and image into the same printed page using cheap and technically simple methods.'[26] Wood engraving, combined with more efficient printing techniques, meant that the literature business was transformed into a mass-produced commercial industry and, for the first time, illustrated books became affordable to working and middle class families.[27]

Wood engraving, in many ways, was the New Media of the Victorian era. And, like the web today, it touched upon all aspects of society and allowed for knowledge to be disseminated in new ways and across all social classes. As the opening address from the first edition of the *Illustrated London News* in 1842 states:

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[24] Brian Maidment, *Reading Popular Prints 1790–1870* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 15.
[25] Geoffrey Wakeman, *Victorian Book Illustration: The Technical Revolution* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), p. 20.
[26] Maidment, *Reading Popular Prints 1790–1870*, p. 15.
[27] Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790–1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 2.

> there is no staying the advance of this art into all the departments of our social system. It began in a few isolated volumes – stretched itself next over fields of natural history and science – penetrated the arcane of our own general literature – and made companionship with our household books. At one plunge it was in the depth of the stream of poetry – working with its every current – partaking of the glow, and adding to the sparkles of glorious waters – and so refreshing the very soul of genius, that even Shakspere came to us clothed with a new beauty, while other kindred poets of our language seemed as it were to have put on festive garments to crown the marriage of their muses to the arts. Then it walked abroad among the people, went into the poorer cottages, and visited the humblest homes in cheap guises, and perhaps, in roughish forms; but still with the illustrative and the instructive principle strongly worked upon, and admirably developed for the general improvement of the human race.

The address ends with the editors affirming their commitment to their readers:

> Here we make our bow, determined to pursue our great experiment with boldness [...] to keep continually before the eye of the world a living and moving panorama of all its actions and influences; and to withhold from society no point that [...] can be brought within the reach and compass of the Editors of the ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS![28]

[28] 'Our Address', *Illustrated London News*, 14 May, 1842, p. 1.

The passage is striking for a number of reasons. First, because it describes Shakespeare becoming literally *refashioned* by a new medium of representation ('Shakspere came to us clothed with a new beauty'). This refashioning, or, as Jay Bolter and David Grusin would call it, *remediation*, happens time and time again in the history of Shakespeare's texts. As Alan Galey observes, Shakespeare's plays have been used as 'prototypical material for publishing experiments, new media projects and tech demos, as well as theories of information and computing from the seventeenth century to the present.'[29] Second, its typical description of how illustration can be used for the betterment of humanity recalls how the first affordable PC's sold in the mid-nineties were often advertised as being pedagogical and for the betterment of human knowledge (I will have more to say on this later when I discuss Microsoft's *Encarta*). Finally, and perhaps the most startling aspect of the *ILN*'s opening address, is the extent to which it is analogous to the opening editorial by Louis Rossetto in the first edition of *Wired* magazine in 1993:

> Why *Wired*? Because the Digital Revolution is whipping through our lives like a Bengali typhoon – while the mainstream media is still groping for the snooze button. […] So why now? Why *Wired?* Because in the age of information overload the ultimate luxury is meaning and

[29] Alan Galey, *The Shakespearean Archive*: *Experiments in New Media from the Renaissance to Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 5.

> context. Or put another way, if you're looking for the soul of our new society in wild metamorphosis, our advice is simple. Get *Wired*.[30]

Where the *ILN* informed its readers that 'There is now no staying the advance of this art into all the departments of our social system', Rossetto in *Wired* (albeit it in a different register) announces that 'the Digital Revolution is whipping through our lives like a Bengali typhoon'. And where the *ILN* comforted its readership by assuring them that they will 'keep continually before the eye of the world a living and moving panorama of its actions and influences', Rossetto claims that 'if you're looking for the soul of our new society in wild metamorphosis, our advice is simple. Get *Wired*.' Both publications promise their readership that they will make sense of a new and changing world. Both publications were also 'great experiments with boldness': the *ILN* was the world's first fully illustrated newspaper, while the hypermediated style of *Wired* would not only prove to be highly influential, but it would also lead Jay Bolter to comment that 'Every page of *WIRED* is a visual allegory for McLuhan's apothegm that the medium is the message'.[31] I suspect that editors of the *ILN* also understood this.

It is these parallels between the past and the present that help us to appreciate that there is nothing particularly 'new' about new media as all media were once new.[32] As Carolyn Marvin observes:

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[30] Louis Rossetto, 'Editorial', *Wired*, March/April 1993, p. 10.
[31] Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext and the Remediation of Print* (New Jersey: Georgia Institute of Technology, 2001), p. 51.
[32] See, for example, Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree eds. *New Media 1740–1915* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004).

> *New technologies* is a historically relative term. We are not the first generation to wonder at the rapid and extraordinary shifts in the dimension of the world and the human relationships it contains as a result of new forms of communication, or to be surprised by the changes those shifts occasion in the regular pattern of our lives.[33]

Marvin limits her study to electric communications, beginning with the invention of the telegraph, which she sees as the starting point of modern mass media and culture. But, perhaps mass media began in the Victorian period with the illustrated book and illustrated periodicals such as the *ILN* and the *Graphic*. This is the argument that Patricia Anderson puts forward in her book *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790–1860*, where she asserts that advances in printing technology and its 'associated imagery' brought about the 'beginnings of a modern mass culture' in the Victorian era.[34] Furthermore, she goes on to write that 'the concept of "mass" carries with it a historical perception of unprecedentedness' and during that period 'there was among both the producers and consumers of the emerging culture a shared consciousness that they were participating in a fundamental and far reaching change in the structure of knowledge and communication.'[35] This sense of 'unprecedentedness' is being echoed today, throughout wider culture and, significantly, within academia as a consequence of the digital and its potential impact on research. As the authors of

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[33] Carolyn Marvin, *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking about Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 3.
[34] Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture*, pp. 1-2.
[35] Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture*, p. 11.

Digtial_Humanities observe, 'we see this moment as marking a fundamental shift in the perception of the core creative activities of being human, in which the values and knowledge of the humanities are seen as crucial for shaping every domain of culture and society.'[36]

Perhaps, unexpectedly, it is also an aspiration of the nineteenth century publisher and editor Charles Knight, whose *Pictorial Edition* of Shakespeare's Works forms part of my archive. A member of the 'Society of the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge', Knight was an educational reformer who believed that 'the poor man must be made a thinking man – a man capable of intellectual pleasures'.[37] Knight wanted to shape the values and knowledge of mid-nineteenth century Britain by publishing cheap illustrated literature that was available to every class of society, and which were also, crucially, educational. As he writes in 'Reading for All' in the first edition of the *Penny Magazine* from March 1832: 'The false judgments which are sometimes formed by the people upon public events, can only be corrected by the diffusion of sound knowledge'.[38] Furthermore, Knight went on to comment in the December of 1832 that it was technology itself that allowed him to 'diffuse' knowledge in such an effective way:

> ready and cheap communication breaks down the obstacle of time and space, – and thus, bringing all ends of a great kingdom as it were together, greatly reduces the inequalities of fortune and situation, by

[36] Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunefeld, Todd Presner and Jeffrey Schnapp, *Digital_Humanities* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012), p. vii.
[37] Charles Knight, *Passages of a Working Life During Half a Century with a Prelude of Early Reminiscences*, 3 Vols. (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1864), II, p. 243.
[38] Charles Knight, 'Reading for All', *Penny Magazine,* 31 March 1832, p. 1.

> equalizing the price of commodities, and to that extent making them accessible to all.[39]

It is difficult not to hear, in this passage, a historical resonance with some of the rhetoric used by digital humanists and proponents of open culture. For example, Brett Bobley observes how 'access to large collections of digitized cultural heritage materials will transform the humanities', while the Creative Commons website announces that 'Our vision is nothing less than realizing the full potential of the Internet – universal access to research and education, full participation in culture – to drive a new era of development, growth, and productivity.'[40] Charles Knight did much to encourage a 'full participation in culture', and, like Valerie Gray, I believe that scholars have unfairly neglected him and the vast contribution he made to education and publication in that century.[41]

Enter, then, into the pictorial and technological crucible that was the mid-nineteenth century, a certain Mr William Shakespeare, Gent. For the Victorians, according to Adrian Poole, Shakespeare was their 'utterance, a language for expressing and explaining themselves and their world, for talking to each other.'[42] Gail Marshall, meanwhile, notes that during the period, Shakespeare was 'acted, spoken by theatre professionals and ordinary

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[39] Charles Knight, 'Preface', *Penny Magazine*, 1832, p. iv.
[40] Brett Bobley quoted in Michael Gavin and Kathleen Marie Smith, 'An Interview with Brett Bobley', in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 61-66 (p. 63); Creative Commons 'About' Page <https://creativecommons.org/about> [accessed on 23 April 2016].
[41] See, Valerie Gray, *Charles Knight: Educator, Publisher, Writer* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).
[42] Adrian Poole, *Shakespeare and the Victorians* (London: Thomson Learning, 2004), p. 2.

citizens, quoted, painted and endlessly referred to. […] Shakespeare is a living presence in the nineteenth century, ever available and resonating through English-language speech and writing.'[43] While Marshall mentions in passing that Shakespeare was 'painted', both she and Poole emphasise the verbal over the visual. For Stuart Sillars, however, 'Victorian Shakespeare, with its complexes of authenticity, actuality and identity, is an intensely visual construction'.[44] He writes how technology enabled Shakespearean images to be produced and disseminated around the world:

> the most recent technology made such images instantly transmissible. The steam press, wood-pulp paper, wood engraving, the stereo plate and, in the later years, steel engraving and chromo-lithography, facilitated the production of images in vast numbers; railways transported them throughout the kingdom, steamships took them across the Atlantic. The past, once Imaged, became available to all through the temporal ordering of the present.[45]

Shakespeare in Victorian visual culture was entwined in technology. Not only was the availability of pictorial Shakespearean material accessible to more and more people through new means of transportation such as the railway, but also the very mode of representation (wood engraved illustrations, for example) allowed for such material to be produced in high quantity and

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[43] Gail Marshall, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 1.
[44] Stuart Sillars, *Shakespeare, Time and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 1.
[45] Sillars, *Shakespeare, Time and the Victorians*, p. 18.

became affordable to a large section of the Victorian public. This availability was, as Sillars notes, 'driven by the growth in popular education as part of the high-Victorian drive for self-improvement.'[46]

Victorian Shakespeare illustration is so culturally significant, then, because the illustrated editions of the Complete Works would have been the first encounter with Shakespeare that many readers would have had. They were sold relatively cheaply and were affordable to members of the working classes, a group of people that may not have been able to experience Shakespeare in the London theatre. A consequence of this was that the experience of Shakespeare was often based on these illustrated pages rather than the stage. As such, these editions played an important part in how the Victorian population thought about and constructed Shakespeare. From 1840–1870 the illustrated edition becomes a theatre of the book, an *Iconoplay*, where words and images combine in 'complex interaction', just as they do on the stage. According to Maidment, it is this 'intense relationship between an image and a written text' that is the most 'profound revolution brought about by the massive use of wood engraved illustration'.[47] Before the development of wood engraving and the printing technology that allowed for the mass circulation of illustrated texts, Shakespeare's Works often contained just a single frontispiece or a few illustrations per play that were printed on different pages to the text. With the advent of the Iconoplay, we witness not

[46] Stuart Sillars, *The Illustrated Shakespeare, 1709–1875* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 27.
[47] Maidment, *Reading Popular Prints*, p. 15.

only more integration between word and image, but also a vast increase in the sheer quantity of illustrations in these editions.

If Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare is so culturally significant, what can account for the lack of scholarly attention it has received? Outside of Sillars' brilliant study on the history of Illustrated Shakespeare, where he devotes two chapters to the Victorian period, there is very little work done in this field. Julia Thomas argues and critiques the popular assumption that illustration, generally, is seen merely as mirroring culture and cultural values; it 'has no constitutive function', she writes, 'it is not regarded as shaping or determining these values.' [48] This has meant that illustration has been marginalised in art history and literary studies, relegated 'to the bottom (painting is at the top) of the hierarchical classification of genres that defines the visual arts'.[49] Moreover, Thomas goes on to highlight how this misapprehension can also be seen materially: 'in its reflection of the words it accompanies, illustration is positioned as subservient and inferior not only to context, but also to text.'[50] Sillars believes the lack of scholarly attention illustration has received is because it falls 'between academic disciplines'.[51] Both Thomas and Sillars are undoubtedly correct in their understanding of why illustration has been much neglected. However, there is something specific about the mid-nineteenth century, certainly with regards to Shakespeare, that could help us further to explain this neglect. These editions of Shakespeare are not considered

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[48] Julia Thomas, 'Reflections on Illustration: the Database of Mid-Victorian Wood-Engraved Illustration (DMVI)', *Journal of Illustration Studies* (Dec 2007) <http://jois.uia.no/articles.php?article=37> [accessed 6 Jan 2016].
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Sillars, *The Illustrated Shakespeare*, p. 3.

'scholarly', but 'popular'. As Sillars observes, 'the illustrated edition was the broadest channel by which the reading public gained an acquaintance, whatever its nature or intensity, with the plays of Shakespeare – a readership much larger than those for the editions that form the scholarly tradition'.[52] As such, these editions would have contributed to what Anderson calls 'the transformation and expansion of popular culture', which:

> was not just a matter of an increase in the quantity and kind of information, entertainment, and illustration available to working people. It was also a social shift whereby workers joined a wider cultural formation that was not restricted to a single age-group, gender, or class.[53]

This new cultural formation, according to John Carey, would eventually lead to a new literary and artistic philosophy: modernism. In *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, Carey argues that modernism was a 'hostile reaction' to mass culture and the educational reforms of the nineteenth century. The 'English literary intelligentsia', he comments, wanted to 'exclude these newly (or "semi-educated") readers, and so to preserve the intellectual's seclusion from the "mass"'.[54] Embedded within a culture, perhaps even at the beginning of it, where this new reading public was emerging in the mid-nineteenth century, it is not surprising that these illustrated editions of Shakespeare's

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[52] Sillars, *The Illustrated Shakespeare*, pp. 28-29.
[53] Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture*, p. 158.
[54] John Carey, 'Preface', in *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992).

Works have been overlooked. It is only now in our *post-modern* culture and our *post-modern* university that these editions have become 'visible' again. Shakespeare, it seems, is always a site of tension between emergent and prevailing ideologies in which the very institution of 'English Literature' is often at stake. As James H. Kavanagh acknowledges:

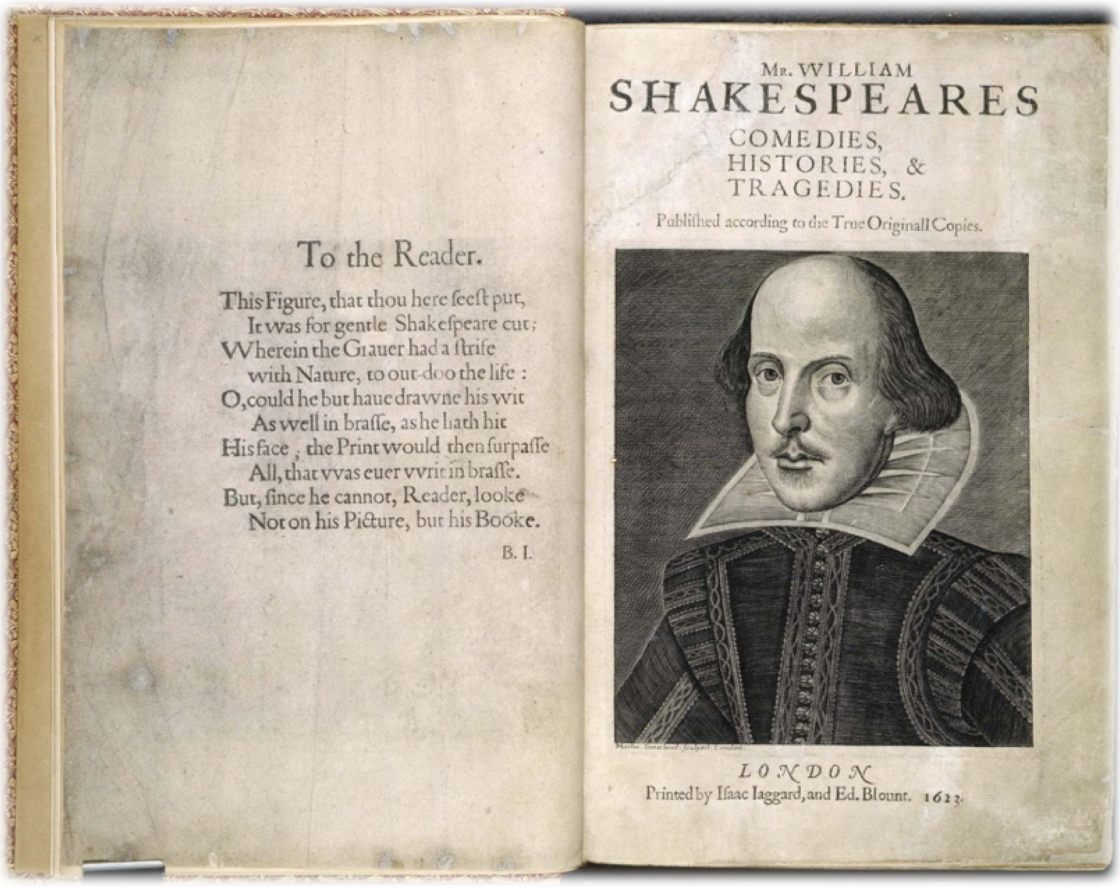
> To discuss Shakespeare is to discuss the study of English itself. The word 'Shakespeare' is less the name of a specific historical figure, than a sign that has come to designate a vaguely defined, but fiercely defended, set of characteristics that function as the touchstone of value for what we commonly call the 'English literary tradition'.[55]

And, perhaps, Shakespeare illustration has been overlooked for a far more simple reason: since the publication of the First Folio in 1623, readers and scholars have been told to 'looke / not on his Picture, but his Booke.' The centrality of words, has been engrained in what it means to study Shakespeare (and hence English Literature) from the very beginning of 'Shakespeare' being in print.

The Shakespeare illustration with which most of us are familiar is the engraving of William Shakespeare himself on the title page of the 1623 First Folio. The engraving by Martin Droeshout has been the focus of much critical

[55] James H. Kavanagh, 'Shakespeare in Ideology', in *Alternative Shakespeares* ed. John Drakakis (New York and London: Routledge, 1985), pp. 144-165 (p. 144).

attention, mostly negative.[56] Regardless of this negativity, the point of the portrait is not the skill with which Droeshout captures Shakespeare's likeness or its inherent artistic merit. The illustration functions as a generator of *meaning* and creates, when read in conjunction with Ben Jonson's poem on the opposite page, a perfect encapsulation of the power of illustration: when words and images combine, they create a space for meaning which is greater than the words or picture taken singularly (figure 1). Entitled 'To the Reader' Jonson's famous poem is more like a user guide to the First Folio, giving the reader instructions in how to approach it:



To the Reader.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
with Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but haue drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was euer writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

MR. WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARES
COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies.

LONDON
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

Figure 1 Ben Jonson, 'To the Reader', in *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies* (London, 1623).

[56] John Dover Wilson, for example, describes the image as a 'clumsy engraving' derived from the bust of Shakespeare in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, *The Essential Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 4.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Grauer had a strife
With Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brass, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.[57]

The effect of this juxtaposition of word and image is to correlate Shakespeare, the living breathing man, with 'Shakespeare', the author of this book. The juxtaposition affirms and emphasises the concept of Shakespeare the 'Artist', with his 'wit': the words contained within the pages of the First Folio. The conjunction implies a sort of spectrality, where Shakespeare lives through his words and thus gives the First Folio a powerful authorial presence. This pictorial aspect of the First Folio has been woefully overlooked, but it may be a far more significant area for critical debate than whether or not the portrait looks like Shakespeare or which Martin Droeshout (the elder, or younger) engraved it.[58] If, as Jonathan Bate contends, it is through Shakespeare that the concept of 'Genius' was invented, then I would suggest that the powerful

[57] Ben Jonson, 'To the Reader', in *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies Histories and Tragedies* (London, 1623).
[58] See, for example, Mary Edmond, 'It was for Gentle Shakespeare Cut', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42 (Autumn 1991), 339-344.

conjunction of Jonson's poem and the Droeshout Portrait forms a significant part of this conception and construction.[59] By warning us to 'Looke / Not on his Picture, but his Booke', Jonson's poem encapsulates and enacts the academic marginalisation of illustration whilst at the same time, participating in the complex readings the poem and engraving generate together and demonstrates how intellectually valuable and stimulating the study of illustration can be. Despite the power of the Droeshout Portrait to fascinate (or, indeed, perhaps because of it), scholarly attention has mostly been fixated upon, to quote Hamlet, 'words, words, words' (1.2. l. 195).

Alan Galey writes that the First Folio 'bears consideration as an experiment in a new medium' as it was only the second time a book had collected together a playwright's works in the 'folio format, following Ben Jonson's 1616 *Workes*'.[60] Pertinently, however, as Galey points out, it was also the first time a Folio collection had been assembled *posthumously*. The First Folio, then, 'functions as an inherited archive of playtexts'.[61] Shakespeare, or rather what we mean by 'Shakespeare', has always existed in bits: the folio is assembled from each individual play whilst even the plays themselves are fragmentary, divided as they are into scenes and acts. Moreover, according to Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, the plays may even have been assembled from the actor's parts, which consisted solely of the cues and lines for each character in the play.[62] Alongside this, as Galey notes, is the fact that no two surviving First Folios are 'typographically

[59] Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London: Picador, 1997).
[60] Galey, *The Shakespearean Archive*, p. 82.
[61] Galey, *The Shakespearean Archive*, p. 72.
[62] Simon Palrey and Tiffany Sterne, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

identical'. What we call '*the* Folio is anything but stable and unitary'.[63] Despite this inherent textual instability, the Folio nevertheless collects, in one accessible and 'user friendly' interface, plays that were, when originally published as quartos, 'not regarded as "literature" but as relatively ephemeral entertainment'.[64] It also prints for the first time eighteen plays that, had they not been published in the First Folio, would have been lost to history. The First Folio is a print-based archive that collects together work that was regarded as 'ephemeral entertainment' and which also makes visible and brings to light plays that would have remained inaccessible not just to Shakespeare's contemporaries, but also to future generations of Shakespeare scholars, readers, actors and directors. The First Folio, was more than just an 'experiment'; it was one of the most successful new media productions the world has ever seen.

Because of the advent of the digital, it has become far easier to comprehend and appreciate 'the book' as a piece of technology. We understand the past in terms of the technology available to us today and we comprehend the present in terms of technology from the past. As Marshall McLuhan has observed, 'When faced with a totally new situation, we tend always to attach ourselves to the objects, to the flavor of the most recent past. We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backwards into the future.'[65] It is a point that Walter Benjamin addressed in 1940 with his essay 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'. Using the Paul Klee painting

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[63] Galey, *The Shakespearean Archive*, p. 72.
[64] Fredson Bowers quoted in Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 11.
[65] Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (London: Penguin, 2008).

Angelus Novus as a symbol for thinking about history (figure 2), Benjamin writes:

> A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[66]

[66] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zahn (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 245-255 (p. 249).

Figure 2 Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus* (1920), Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

The digital humanities allow us to reassemble some of this wreckage in ways that make sense of both the past and our own historical moment. The power of the digital lies in how it facilitates this reassembly and also how it forces us to understand that we can never assemble the wreckage of the past as it once was. The importance of the digital, and its potential progressiveness, is that it challenges us to question how we make sense of history. The past never presents itself to us unmediated, whether in plays, Victorian periodicals and newspapers, or photographs. The extent to which we understand how digital technology is transforming our cultural inheritance is dependent upon an active engagement with the past in all its similarities, contradictions and its difference to the present. The best medium, I suggest, that we have to explore how we make history in the present is the digital archive and the best 'objects'

that are the 'flavor of the most recent past' are the critically neglected wood engraved Shakespeare illustrations from the Victorian era, including the edition edited and published by that great reformer of Victorian print and education, Charles Knight.

The four Victorian editions that make up my archive are what Sillars calls the 'major editions'.[67] These are the edition by Charles Knight, called *The Pictorial Edition* which was originally published in fifty six parts between 1838 and 1843, and was eventually published in eight volumes.[68] The second edition is by Barry Cornwall with illustrations by Kenny Meadows that was originally published in 1843.[69] This is followed by the Howard Staunton edition with illustrations by John Gilbert that was originally issued in parts between 1856 and 1860, and published in three volumes between 1858 and 1860.[70] Finally, there is the edition by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke with illustrations by Henry Courtney Selous. This final edition was originally published in parts and volumes between 1864 and 1868.[71] All four editions are visually very distinctive and interpret the plays in different ways. Charles Knight's edition takes the approach of treating the plays as if they had an actual historical reality. That is to say, Knight (apart from in the frontispieces)

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[67] Sillars, *The Illustrated Shakespeare*, p. 253.
[68] *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspere. Edited by Charles Knight*, 8 Vols. (London: Charles Knight and Co., [1839-42?]). The edition that I have used in the archive is undated, and I have therefore used the dates provided by the British Library for the first edition.
[69] *The Works of Shakespeare revised from the best authorities with a memoir, and essay on his genius, by Barry Cornwall: and, annotations and introductory remarks on the plays, by distinguished writers: illustrated with engravings on wood, from designs by Kenny Meadows*, 3 Vols. (1843; London: William S. Orr and Co., 1846).
[70] *The Works of Shakespeare. Edited by Howard Staunton; The Illustrations by John Gilbert; Engraved by the Dalziel Brothers,* 3 Vols. (1858-60; London: George Routledge and Sons, 1865-67).
[71] *Cassell's Illlustrated Shakespeare, The Plays of Shakespeare, Edited and Annotated by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke,* (London, Paris and Melbourne: Cassell& Company, Limited, [1864-68?]).

is far less concerned with interpreting characters or scenes from the plays, than in depicting the landscapes, the costumes and the objects that the characters would have worn and used if they were real life people living in the time the plays were set. The first illustration in *Julius Caesar*, for example, does not depict any of the characters from the play, but instead shows two generic 'Roman Standard Bearers', while the rest of the illustrations from the play are mostly landscapes of Rome. In this way, Knight's *Julius Caesar* is characteristic of his approach to all the other plays in this edition. However, when taken as part of a larger body of material that includes the three other Shakespeare editions, Knight's *Pictorial Edition* begins to take on a fascinating new dimension as these illustrations became involved in a dialogue with all the other illustrations from the other editions. So, a search in the archive for *Julius Caesar*, for example, would bring up all the illustrations in the archive that have been keyworded as 'Julius Caesar' and a user could then appreciate the illustrations of Knight's edition in a much broader and far more compelling context. This example perfectly illustrates (pun intended) just how valuable the digital archive can be in enabling users to see new connections and interesting juxtapositions. It allows images that have been separated by both time and space to be brought together to generate new meanings.

By incorporating the illustrations of Kenny Meadows, which are a wondrous mix of the weird and the surreal and betray his role as a caricaturist for *Punch*, the more novelistic interpretations of John Gilbert and the deceptively simple readings of the plays by H.C Selous, alongside those of

Knight's edition, the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* is what Peter Conrad might describe as a 'Victorian Treasure-House'.[72] By recasting the 'Scholar as Curator' and creating our own digital collections, we begin to assemble the 'wreckage' from the past in new ways and redefine what scholarship does and who it is for.

Digitisation

After starting my work on the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, I became anxious that another postgraduate student somewhere in the world was working on the exact same project as I was. After all, these illustrated editions of Shakespeare are not particularly difficult to obtain and the emergence of the digital humanities meant that many different people were trying to fit their work onto a digital platform. Victorian Shakespeare illustration seemed to me to be an ideal corpus of material for exploring the implications of the digital through creating an online resource and for better understanding Shakespeare illustration by using that resource for more 'traditional' research purposes such as an investigation into how the Victorians visually portrayed certain characters. My initial fears that someone else was working on a similar project were unfounded. As it soon became apparent, digitisation is hard, labourious work. Digitising my own work has meant that I have been able to appreciate and critically engage with how these archives are mediated. Unlike mining a dataset that has been digitised by Google or Microsoft, for example, digitising my own material has allowed me to have creative control over every

[72] Peter Conrad, *The Victorian Treasure House* (London: William Collins, 1973).

aspect. Digitisation may be time-consuming but it is also perhaps the single most important factor in the creation of such archives. Without time and care spent on this process, all other aspects of the archive will suffer.

What is most striking about digitisation is how physical and mechanistic the process is. If the purpose of the humanities is to *produce* knowledge, then digitising pages of material can feel like being on a production line. The scanner marks the boundary between the private world of the individual scholar's research and the potential public dissemination of this research to the rest of the world through the web. But the physicality of digitisation is not without intellectual reward. In fact, digitisation reduces and makes apparent just how unhelpful the old binary between mind and body is. Digitisation is fundamentally physical research. It provides us with a unique way of learning about and experiencing texts and how they function through hands-on engagement. It helps us to understand the book as *technology* and how that technology generates meaning. Considering the crucial importance of digitisation to projects, it is worth noting how very little scholarship there is on the topic. Whilst articles and monographs invariably discuss digitisation and how we read the digital text or image differently from its material counterpart, they do so *after* an artefact has been digitised. It is very rare for a digital humanist to discuss the process and, significantly, to discuss that process as research in its own right. Bearing in mind that it is the work of humanists, digital or otherwise, to ask questions of material, it is noticeable how few researchers ask where a certain dataset come from and how it was created. Just as Roland Barthes demonstrated in *Writing Degree Zero* that there is no

such thing as 'neutral' or 'natural' writing, we are in danger of making the assumption that the digital is 'natural'.[73] However, the digital, like writing, is bound up in its own historical moment.

We can already begin to see this 'naturalisation' in a field as relatively new as the digital humanities. The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), for example, is described far too often (in my experiences at conferences and in my own reading) as if it were the only way of doing digital humanities work and without any interrogation into that way of marking up texts for digital presentation. As Andrew Prescott pointedly observes, the 'digital humanities community' has been 'too often preoccupied with preserving the theological purity of TEI and debating how many angels may dance on an angle bracket. […] While the digital humanities were seeking to show how TEI could be applied to Middle Eastern epigraphy, Google Books was born.'[74] TEI has become what Barthes would call a 'myth': the naturalisation of certain ways of thinking.[75] Far more important than 'preserving the theological purity of TEI', I suggest, is making resources that have broad appeal and that straddle both academia and the wider public. Whilst Google Books, or similar projects are out of reach for most institutions and organisations outside of, well, Google, there is no reason why we should not be ambitious in our digital practice. By freeing ourselves from TEI, for example, and thinking like curators and designers *as well* as literary scholars, we give our work the best chance of reaching a much wider

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[73] Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012).
[74] Andrew Prescott, 'Consumers, Creators or Commentators? Problems of Audience and Mission in the Digital Humanities', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, II (2011), 61-75 (p. 67).
[75] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Jonathan Cape (London: Vintage, 2009).

audience. This way of thinking allows us to make any piece of work interesting to the public and researchers. Even Middle Eastern epigraphy.

Digitising our own work from the beginning of a project enables us to control how the image or text will appear online. It gives us the opportunity to think like a curator and to create new ways of seeing. In *Thinking Contemporary Curating*, Terry Smith discusses seven points that the curator Nick Waterlow wrote in his notebook before his death in 2009.[76] Entitled 'A Curator's Last Will and Testament', Waterlow's points are:

1. Passion
2. An eye for discernment
3. An empty vessel
4. An ability to be uncertain
5. Belief in the necessity of art and artists
6. A medium – bringing a passionate and informed understanding of works of art to an audience in ways that will stimulate, inspire, question
7. Making possible the altering of perception

Smith goes on to write that these 'are the impulses that are reshaping modern curatorial thinking'.[77] Whilst Smith does not engage with the digital in his book, these seven points by Waterlow could also be the ways that we reshape the digital archive, certainly in regard to digitisation. All seven are pertinent to my work, but, as we will see, numbers 6 and 7 especially so (I'm

[76] Nick Waterlow quoted in Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012), pp. 21-22.
[77] Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating*, p. 22.

taking it as a given that we're always passionate about our work). The work we do in the humanities should seek to stimulate, inspire and question. The digital, especially a digital archive, allows us to stimulate our audience in new ways. Whether our archives contain images, videos, texts, or even music, the digital archive is a medium that engages directly with an audience. Whilst print can also be described as an interactive medium (the reader 'interacts' with the text) the interactivity that characterises the digital means that the reader is actively creating and *enacting* their own thought processes by navigating through the digital material that makes up the archive. The dialogue, then, between the creator of the archive and the user is much more collaborative and performative than when we read a print-based document. Because of this new relationship between user and creator, we owe it to our potential audience to create stimulating archives, by thinking about not just what material we want to include in the archive, but also how we want that material to look. I strongly believe that if we begin to think more like curators in the first instance, when we choose what material to present and how it appears on screen, and in the second, by thinking like designers in how that material is structured, we will create resources that will stimulate, question and inspire.

By choosing how the digital material appears on screen we also open up a space for users that makes possible the altering of perception. This is why the digitisation process is so important: it gives us agency over our work and enables us to make decisions about how we want the material presented. The piece of software that gives us a significant amount of control over all

aspects of an image and digitisation is Adobe's Photoshop.[78] When I scan an image 'into' the computer using a relatively inexpensive book scanner (so called because it is raised higher than a typical scanner, thus placing less pressure on the spine of the book), Photoshop is the software I use. I scan the image into Photoshop at 300 dpi (dots per inch), which is a resolution that is more than sufficient for creating high quality digital images of wood engraved illustrations. I then save that image as a TIFF file. TIFF, or to give it its full name, 'Tagged Image File Format', is a 'lossless' file format, meaning that no digital compression has taken place between the scan and the digital image. The JPEG (Joint Photographers Expert Group) file format, by way of comparison, is a 'lossy' format, meaning that images and digital data is inevitably compressed. Unfortunately, due to their lack of compression, TIFF files are much larger in comparison to JPEG, which means they are unsuitable for web presentation. However, TIFF files provide the base image for all the images in *VISA*. After the image has been saved as a TIFF, I then convert it (after some image manipulation has taken place) into a JPEG, ready for web presentation. The TIFF files are the 'master files' of the archive and I take great care in making sure they are backed up onto an external hard disk drive. Assuming that I am likely to be the only person for the foreseeable future to have digitised these Victorian images, it is important that they are backed up safely and in a file format that is compression free. It is in this

[78] For an interesting discussion about Photoshop and its various tools, see, Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command* (New York & London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 124-147.

respect that digital curation also fulfils the etymological meaning of the word 'curate', which means to 'care' for.[79]

As will become apparent as this thesis develops, the use of Photoshop has been integral to my ambition to create new ways of seeing and to alter perception. When an illustration is scanned into the computer, the digital image becomes an entirely new artefact. It is not *instead of* its material counterpart, but exists alongside it, complementing it and in dialogue with it. *The William Blake Archive*, as has already been discussed, takes the view that digital simulation of historical artefacts should be as visually accurate as possible to its source material. The aspiration is a noble one, and perfectly understandable, especially when working with material as complex as Blake's. However, viewing a piece of work on a screen, no matter how accurate it is to its source material, is an entirely different experience to encountering that work in its material form. Not necessarily better, but different. The affordances of the material are that it generates meaning through its tactility (how it feels), what it may smell like, the size of the artefact and the environment that we encounter that artefact in as well as its actual content. All of these qualities are exactly those things that the digital *cannot do*.

Essentially, a digital artefact, no matter how well it visually corresponds to its material source, creates meaning in an entirely different way. The experience of looking at the image on a screen means that the material artefact has undergone, to quote Ariel from *The Tempest* 'a sea-change / into

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[79] *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], 'curate', <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/curate> [accessed 20 April 2016].

something rich and strange'.[80] What we lose in how the the artefact creates meanings materially is made up for in the richness of what we can now do with that image. For example, we can place it in new contexts, we can share it easily with friends, we can display it on a website or even use it as a profile picture on Facebook or Twitter. Or we can embed it within a digital archive where it can create meaning as a single digital item in relationship to all the other images within that archive. The main characteristic of the digital image is its ease of reproducibility and the contexts that are then opened up because of this ease. I could take an image from *The William Blake Archive* and use it for my profile picture on Twitter. It does not matter how visually accurate the digital image is in such circumstances. By using the image on Twitter, its meanings have changed. The image itself, however, has remained exactly the same and this would imply, as with 'Pillars Coffee Shop and Restaurant', that meaning is dependent on context just as much in the digital world as it is in the 'material' one. It is not so much what the image says, then, but *how* it says it.

In the Victorian period, wood engraved illustrations were designed to be reproduced and what made them reproducible in the first instance was the durability of the wood blocks (and electrotypes and stereotypes) so that the engraved image could be set on a printing press time and time again. In fact, the Victorians would seem to have adhered to Walter Benjamin's comment that 'the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for

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[80] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works,* pp. 1191-1189 (1.2. ll. 399-405). All further references are to this edition of *The Tempest* and line numbers are presented parenthetically in the body of the text.

reproducibility.'[81] Furthermore, Victorian wood engraving also problematises Benjamin's notion of the 'aura' (the idea that works of art have a quasi-magical quality because of their uniqueness), because in order to make these illustrations reproducible in the first place, the 'original' image is destroyed when an engraver begins his work on the wood block. It is also interesting to note that many of the wood blocks were often used in different contexts than that for which they were originally intended: the same illustration could often be found in different publications throughout the period.[82] As Paul Goldman comments, there was frequently a 'cavalier re-use of blocks often years after their initial publication.'[83] Moreover:

> Victorian publishers were prone to such activities not least because problems of copyright did not exist in illustrations at this time and if they held an image 'in stock' as it were, it was a simple matter to insert pictures into books where they seemed appropriate and even, on numerous occasions, where they made no sense with the later text whatsoever. When one is trying to track particular designs it proves even more perplexing due to the habit of re-titling a design to suit the new text.[84]

It is for the reasons mentioned above (the lack of copyright, there being no

[81] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', p. 218.
[82] Charting how these illustrations circulated would make for a very interesting digital humanities project in the future.
[83] Paul Goldman, 'Defining Illustration Studies: Towards a New Academic Discipline', in *Reading Victorian Illustration, 1855–1875: Spoils of the Lumber Room*, eds. Paul Goldman and Simon Cooke (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 24.
[84] Paul Goldman, 'Defining Illustration Studies', pp. 24-25.

such thing as an 'original', the wood blocks encouraging reproducibility) that the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* has been designed in the spirit and according to the methodologies used by these Victorian publishers. The archive represents a remediation, not just with the material that it contains, but also in the underlying ideas of Victorian image making: the philosophy of reproducibility and with wanting my work to engage as many people as possible. Key to achieving this aim has been the use of Photoshop.

Remediating the images from the page to the screen is not just a matter of digitising the illustrations and placing them on a platform on the web. As will become apparent in what follows, much thought has gone into how best to present this work online. To create new ways of seeing this material and to encourage reproducibility (remixing, for example), I take the original scanned image and treat it in Photoshop by 'cleaning' the image and removing all the dirt and staining from the file. After this process is complete, I adjust the contrast and brightness settings, making sure the image is as striking as possible. It is a long process, but it is, nevertheless, worthwhile as the end result makes the illustrations look vibrant, fresh, and 'reproducible' – we want to use these images and engage with them. Again, it is worth reiterating that the digital image is not ontologically the same object as its material counterpart and the digital archive is not intended to replace a special collections library but is complementary to it.

In certain ways, this process has an historical antecedent in the Victorian period with the works of John Ruskin and William Morris. We often think of digital work as being very mechanical but it can also be 'hands on' in

a way that is analogous to arts and crafts. In *Making is Connecting*, David Gauntlett writes that 'For Ruskin, the thought and the craft of making, the mental and the physical, were united in the same process.'[85] This is exactly what is so valuable about the digital humanities: through the act of making things, the 'mental and the physical' become entwined. Theory and practice are brought together in a way that generates new knowledges, new research questions and new challenges. Working with Photoshop, for example, has allowed me to create the content for a resource that I hope will 'inspire, stimulate and question': inspire people to create their own digital archives, perhaps, or use the images as part of their own work; stimulate them into thinking more about Shakespeare illustration and the digital humanities; and invite them to question and think about what it means to use these resources more generally.

People are anxious about Photoshop, regarding it as synonymous with all that is bad and 'inauthentic' about modern society. Newspapers and magazines are often full of stories about how an actress or model (and, yes, unfortunately these stories are often highly gendered) has been 'Photoshopped' to enhance her appearance. Nevertheless, there is vast scope for using Photoshop for research in English Literature. McGann, for example, has written about how he played around with Photoshop's filters on some paintings by Rossetti in a process that he has, perhaps unhelpfully, called 'deformance'.[86] And very recently I attended a paper where a Professor

[85] David Gauntlett, *Making is Connecting: The Social Meaning of Creativity, from DIY and Knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 33.
[86] McGann, *Radiant Textuality*, pp. 84-85.

was editing some journals by Samuel Beckett but could not read what Beckett had written beneath a blue crayon that the dramatist used for crossing out his work. I suggested that he make a digital copy of the pages, import them into Photoshop and manipulate some of the colour settings and filters. He said, politely, that 'he was not technical' and that was that. But it raises the question: how much knowledge are we missing out on because researchers 'are not technical enough' and have no desire to learn? There might not have been anything significant underneath the blue crayon, but who knows? It might have been an early draft of *Waiting for Godot*.

One final example. There is an old exercise that directors often use when rehearsing Shakespeare plays. In order to understand a particular character's function in a scene, they sometimes remove that character form the scene altogether and get the actors left on stage to say their own lines as normal. This absence leaves a *trace* and it is in this *trace* that meaning can be found and therefore analysed. Illustrations are, as has already been discussed, dependent on the interplay between word and image. What Photoshop allows us to do is to create, like the elimination of the Shakespearean actor, our own *trace* by removing the textual part of an illustration so that we can explore how word and image signify. To demonstrate this, let us look at Kenny Meadows' illustration of the 'Persons Represented' page from *Measure for Measure* (figure 3).

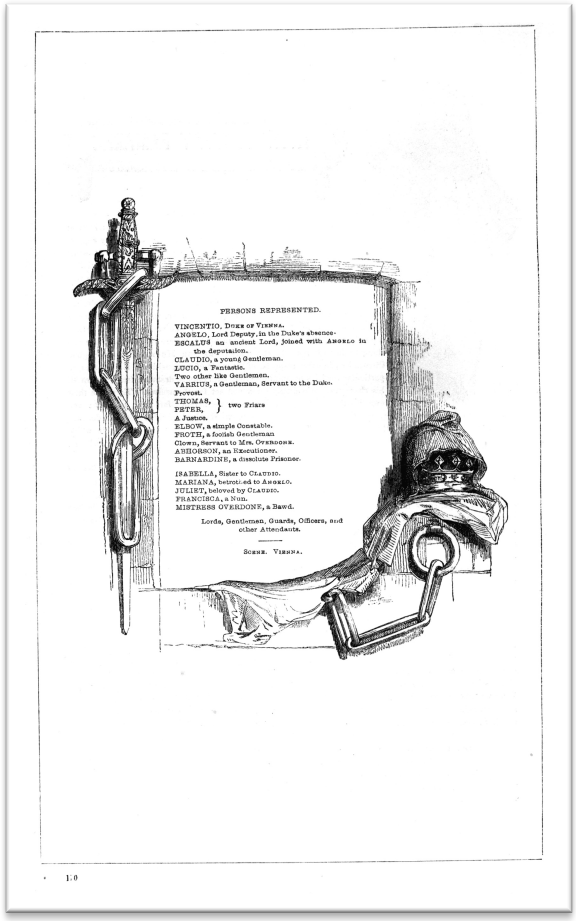
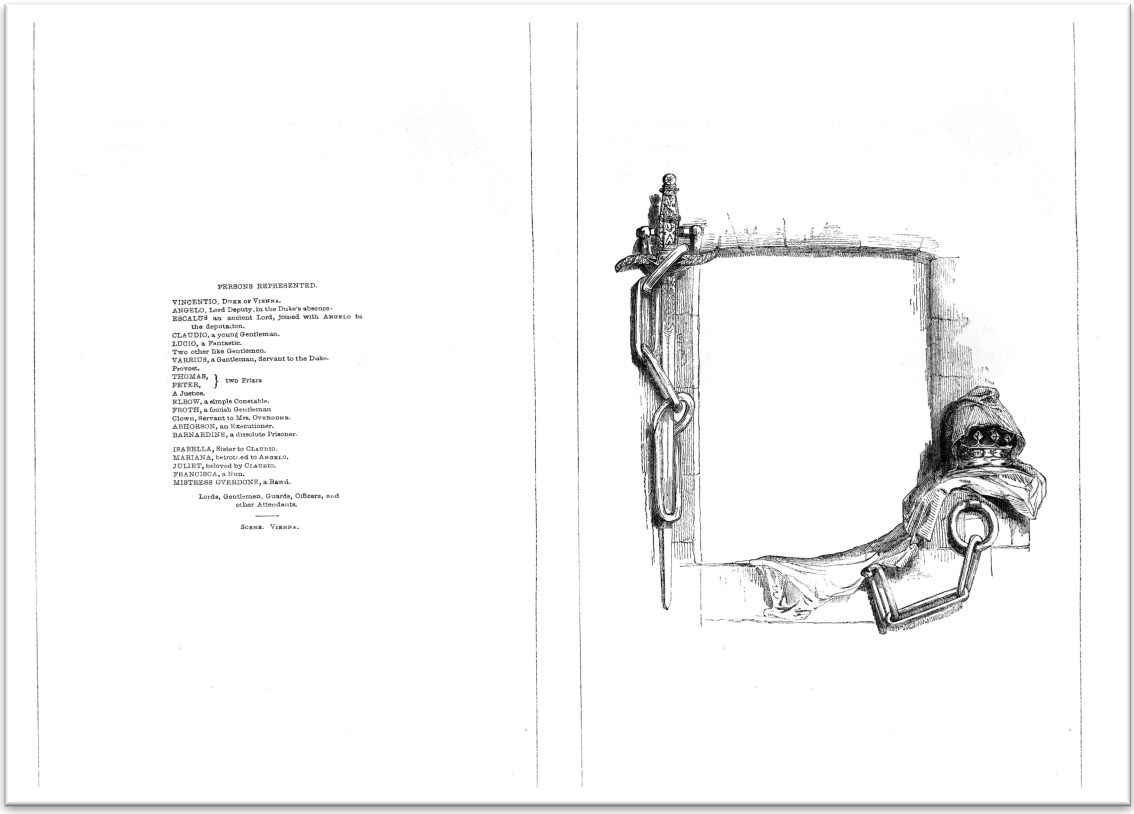


Figure 3 'Persons Represented', illustration by Kenny Meadows in *The Works of Shakespeare revised from the best authorities with a memoir, and essay on his genius, by Barry Cornwall: and, annotations and introductory remarks on the plays, by distinguished writers: illustrated with engravings on wood, from designs by Kenny Meadows* Vol. I (1843; London: William S. Orr and Co., 1846), p. 170.

The illustration depicts the characters who appear in the play surrounded by an illustration of objects associated with justice, the law and prison. By removing the text (the persons represented) from the illustration, we can begin to understand how illustration functions. When both illustration and text are together, they create meaning through their interaction. By separating word and image into two separate documents, it is possible to analyse how this interaction operates (figure 4). The image on the left just shows the text



PERSONS REPRESENTED.

VINCENTIO, Duke of Vienna.
ANGELO, Lord Deputy, in the Duke's absence.
ESCALUS an ancient Lord, joined with ANGELO in the deputation.
CLAUDIO, a young Gentleman.
LUCIO, a Fantastic.
Two other like Gentlemen.
VARRIUS, a Gentleman, Servant to the Duke.
Provost.
THOMAS, } two Friars
PETER, }
A Justice.
ELBOW, a simple Constable.
FROTH, a foolish Gentleman
Clown, Servant to Mrs. OVERDONE.
ABHORSON, an Executioner.
BARNARDINE, a dissolute Prisoner.

ISABELLA, Sister to CLAUDIO.
MARIANA, betrothed to ANGELO.
JULIET, beloved by CLAUDIO.
FRANCISCA, a Nun.
MISTRESS OVERDONE, a Bawd.

Lords, Gentlemen, Guards, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE. VIENNA.

Figure 4 Using Photoshop to separate word and image in order to understand how meaning is generated.

(with Photoshop having removed the illustration) and the image on the right is the illustration without the text.

In the image on the left where there is just the text of the 'Persons Represented', the text is simply stating that this is the list of people who appear in the play. In the image on the right, the illustration without the textual component, we are left with an image that doesn't seem to be saying much at all, apart from the fact that this play is concerned with justice, as the interior of the prison and the sword and crown indicate. When we place the text and the illustration together again, however, a new interpretational meaning is generated. By placing the text back into the illustration, we have a heightened awareness of the fact that Kenny Meadows is commenting that everyone in

Measure for Measure, whether physically in jail, or psychologically within themselves, are entrapped. This is an instance of Kenny Meadows acting as a critic by taking Shakespeare's text and offering a compelling reading of the play through the visual medium of illustration. Of course, this meaning was already there on the page before we began to use Photoshop, but what this procedure does is to make us more sensitive and attentive to how words and images make meaning together.

The etymology of the word 'illustration' is from the Latin verb 'illustro' which means to 'shed light on', 'illuminate', 'lit up'.[87] It also means 'spiritual or intellectual enlightenment'.[88] The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, then, quite literally 'sheds light on' these illustrations which, in most cases, have not been publicly available, certainly not in such an accessible way, for perhaps many many years, hidden away as they have been in the darkness of special collection libraries. But my use of Photoshop on the illustrations also corresponds to the meaning of the word 'illustrate' because, through the process of 'cleaning up' the illustrations, they gain a new *lustre*: they become 'lit up' in a way that they have never been before. Furthermore, the actual digitsation process could also be seen as act of illustration, because the scanner works by shedding light onto the pages of the book and converting these photons into electrical charges. It is in all these senses, then, that my project is not simply *about* illustrated Shakespeare, but is an active engagement with *illustrating Shakespeare*. In short, through recasting the

[87] *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], 'illustrate', <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/illustrate> [accessed 20 April 2016].
[88] *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], 'illustration', <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/illustration> [accessed 20 April 2016].

scholar as curator we have created new ways of seeing the material and our relationship to it. Now we have to give these new ways of seeing a platform so that others may see the light.

Complexity and Simplicity

Theory and practice are entwined. Originally, this chapter was going to discuss the theoretical implications of the archive whilst the subsequent chapter would then explore the practical side of creating such a resource. The problem with this approach, I now realise, is that by trying to separate the concepts of theory and practice into two chapters, I was going against one of the central principles that shaped the creation of my archive: that the theory and practice of a digital archive should exist symbiotically. In effect, it is impossible to separate the two concepts because, in the case of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, the design of the project represents how the archive functions and, ultimately, how it signifies.

This recognition of how theory and practice are interdependent, and the integration of both into this one chapter, has also allowed me to recognise that my archive is not simply a 'neutral' resource, that it represents ideologies and values, not just in terms of design (although it certainly does do that), but also in the sense that the archive's functionality presents an interactive demonstration, enacting what we could productively call *a performance* of the complex ways in which texts function and create meanings in culture. We will interrogate this performance below.

For now, however, I want to mention a person who has defined this new millennium in regard to making the complex simple: Sir Jonathan Ive, Apple's Senior Vice President of Design. Ive, whose designs have included the various incarnations of the iPod, iPad, iPhone and MacBook, has been so influential and important because his work has brought to the forefront of the public consciousness the importance of design in relation to technology. It is when I read the following quote by Ive, given at a keynote in 2013, that I truly understand how the past fifteen years have been defined by his vision and how much that vision has affected the creation of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*: 'I think there is a profound and enduring beauty in simplicity; in clarity, in efficiency. True simplicity is derived from so much more than just the absence of clutter and ornamentation. It's about bringing order to complexity.'[89] *Order to complexity*. If there is one aphorism that should be stuck as a post-it note above digital archivists' computer monitors, it is this.

Of course, something that appears simple is often anything but. Just as the best writing appears effortless in its clarity, disguising the complexity of thought behind it, the best designed websites often have deceptively simple interfaces, which hide the colossal intricacy that makes these websites function. Take Google, for instance. We are so used to 'googling' now that perhaps we no longer consider Google as a website at all, and see it more as a utility such as electricity or hot water. If this is indeed the case, then it is testimony to the designers at Google that we barely even notice the design of

[89] Jonathan Ive at the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) 2013, <http://www.apple.com/apple-events/june-2013> [accessed on 31 July 2014].

their homepage.[90] If we were to analyse the website, however, we would find a fairly empty page, just the colourful Google logo (which implies a certain childlike playfulness), beneath which lies an unassuming empty text box. This simple, empty, text box is, for so many of us, the gateway to the world wide web. Yet this text box is just the visible 'tip of the iceberg' of a vast, hidden, computational infrastructure that includes millions of servers and hugely complicated algorithms. It is this simplicity of interface combined with the unseen complexity of algorithms and servers that allows Google to be so effective: if I type into the text box 'Shakespeare', Google returns 116,000,000 results in 0.19 seconds. It is an astonishing technical achievement and one that we now take increasingly for granted. If we consider the entire world wide web as an archive in itself, then the success of Google can be accounted for by how it brings order to this vast complexity. While the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* is, of course, nowhere near as complex as Google, it does, successfully, I hope, disguise the complex mechanisms that underpin it behind a simple, user-friendly and intuitive interface. Essential to my understanding and approach to interface design has been the work of the designer Dieter Rams.

Both Ives and Google, whether consciously or not, adhere to the designer Dieter Rams' famous principle that good design is as little design as possible: 'Less, but better – because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and the products are not burdened with non-essentials. Back to purity, back to

[90] For an interesting analysis of the Google homepage, see Bill Moggridge, *Designing Interactions* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2007), p. 471.

simplicity.'[91] In the 1960s Rams took a job at the electronics firm Braun where he went on to design many different domestic appliances including radios, clocks and hairdryers that were popular amongst the public and were also hugely influential amongst other designers. It was his experience at Braun that led Rams in the 1980s to write his famous ten principles of design, the last of which is mentioned above:

> **1) Good Design Is Innovative**— The possibilities for innovation are not, by any means, exhausted. Technological development is always offering new opportunities for innovative design. But innovative design always develops in tandem with innovative technology, and can never be an end in itself.
>
> **2) Good Design Makes a Product Useful**—A product is bought to be used. It has to satisfy certain criteria, not only functional but also psychological and aesthetic. Good design emphasizes the usefulness of a product while disregarding anything that could possibly detract from it.
>
> **3) Good Design Is Aesthetic**—The aesthetic quality of a product is integral to its usefulness because products are used every day and have an effect on people and their well-being. Only well-executed objects can be beautiful.

[91] Dieter Rams quoted in Sophie Lovell, *Dieter Rams: As Little Design as Possible* (London: Phaidon Press, 2011), p. 23.

4) Good Design Makes A Product Understandable—It clarifies the product's structure. Better still, it can make the product clearly express its function by making use of the user's intuition. At best, it is self-explanatory.

5) Good Design Is Unobtrusive— Products fulfilling a purpose are like tools. They are neither decorative objects nor works of art. Their design should therefore be both neutral and restrained, to leave room for the user's self-expression.

6) Good Design Is Honest— It does not make a product more innovative, powerful or valuable than it really is. It does not attempt to manipulate the consumer with promises that cannot be kept

7) Good Design Is Long-lasting— It avoids being fashionable and therefore never appears antiquated. Unlike fashionable design, it lasts many years – even in today's throwaway society.

8) Good Design Is Thorough Down to the Last Detail—Nothing must be arbitrary or left to chance. Care and accuracy in the design process show respect towards the consumer.

9) Good Design Is Environmentally Friendly—Design makes an

> important contribution to the preservation of the environment. It conserves resources and minimises physical and visual pollution throughout the lifecycle of the product.
>
> **10) Good Design Is as Little Design as Possible**—Less, but better – because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and the products are not burdened with non-essentials. Back to purity, back to simplicity.[92]

I discovered Rams and these ten principles through my interest in the work of Ive, who with his devotion to simple aesthetics has clearly been influenced by Rams. More importantly, however, for our purposes here, I discovered Rams' principles at the exact moment I was beginning to think more creatively and productively about the overall design and functionality of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*. What is so remarkable about Rams' principles is that they are clearly so relevant today. Rams was working in a pre-digital world, yet his ideas are just as pertinent in the field of web design as they are in the field of consumer products. It is precisely because Rams designed products to be used by the general public that his work is so helpful for those working in the digital humanities: Rams tells us that, whatever project we are working on, we need to keep reminding ourselves that we are creating something which, ultimately, will be used by an end-user, and the success or failure of that project depends on how well that project is designed.

The failure to keep in mind the end-user in the development of digital

[92] Lovell, *Dieter Rams*, p. 23.

projects is discussed in a recent blog post by Melissa Terras called 'Reuse of Digitised Content: So you want to reuse digital heritage content in a creative context? Good luck with that'. Terras argues that whilst there are more digital collections being put online than ever before, people cannot find the content that they are after. This, Terras observes, is down to poorly designed interfaces:

> Flickr is now being used, independently of the commons, to host tens of millions of digital cultural heritage objects, by thousands of institutions! But for a user, browsing through this stuff, it is nigh on impossible to navigate or search Flickr in any meaningful way, and sift through this, simply because Flickr's interface is so poor (and often the content isn't tagged very well, so isn't very findable). […] Finding decent images that are interesting from a design perspective is a time consuming, utterly frustrating task. I speak from a few months of chuck-my-computer-across-the-room frustration in trying to navigate (mostly unsuccessfully) what the cultural heritage sector has spent millions of pounds putting online.[93]

I wholeheartedly share Terras' frustration. As a culture we are currently in a situation where vast amounts of time, energy, and money is being spent on digitisation projects, but so little thought is being given to the overall design

[93] Melissa Terras, 'Reuse of Digitised Content: So you want to reuse digital heritage content in a creative context? Good luck with that', <http://melissaterras.blogspot.co.uk/2014/10/reuse-of-digitised-content-1-so-you.html> [accessed 14 October 2014].

strategy and functionality of these resources that they are, effectively, useless. Imagine going to a library and asking for *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. Instead of being told the catalogue number, you are informed by a member of staff of the general area in the library the book is in. When you get there, you find yourself in a room with millions of loose pages. You ask a librarian for help, but you are simply told that somewhere amongst all these pages are the pages that make up *Oliver Twist* and that you are going to have to find each page yourself. It is an absurd situation, but it is one that we are faced with time and time again when we try to find appropriate digital material on the world wide web. The very simple (and frequently un-intellectual) strategy of digitising artefacts and placing them on the web often neglects the understanding of design and functionality necessary to create a well designed digital resource. This means that these resources, with all the best will in the world, will become obsolete very quickly.

Terras' solution for this problem is that institutions use 'resources to get folk with any sort of graphic or design background to help'. This is all well and good (and admirable), but I would argue that learning about design should be fundamental to any sort of digital education and digital literacy. Just as we are expected to write in sentences and paragraphs to demonstrate our grasp of written literacy, an essential part of learning about the digital should be about studying design. There is a real opportunity here for academics to produce exciting, special, digital work. In the Academy, the nearest discipline to the Digital Humanities, because of its emphasis on theory and practice is, arguably, Creative Writing and just as creative writers can draw on the work of

certain authors in their practice, it would be valuable if digital humanists began to take on board architectural and design principles from practitioners.[94] By incorporating such schools of thought into our digital and critical practice, we can begin to engage more effectively with a much more diverse audience. This is crucial because, as Ann Balsamo writes, 'those who architect the structures of the present, whether digital, virtual, or material, are engaged in the practice of designing our futures.'[95] If we can further develop our digital design skills then the future will be a very exciting place indeed, and we owe it to our cultural heritage and our contemporaries to make it as good as we possibly can. *We need to start making order out of complexity*. And we need to start thinking more creatively. To quote the jazz musician, Charles Mingus, 'Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity'.[96]

Platforms

How, then, can we start to think more creatively about our digital work? The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* has provided me with an invaluable and unique opportunity to think through some of these ideas and concerns, but more importantly, it has also, given me the luxury of *time* to experiment and to practically engage with different online content-management platforms.

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[94] For a discussion about the links between digital humanities practice and creative writing, see Jay David Bolter, 'Critical Theory and the Challenge of New Media', in *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age of New Media*, eds. Mary E. Hocks and Michelle R. Kendrick (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 19-36 (p.25).

[95] Anne Balsamo, *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 52.

[96] Charles Mingus quoted in Gerald Klickstein, *The Musician's Way: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Wellness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 55.

What this experience has taught me is that in order to produce a digital resource that is innovative and makes 'complexity simple' we must first, as Hamlet says to the players, 'suit the action to the word, the word to the action' (3.2. ll. 17-18). In other words, we must make sure that the nature of the content we wish to place online will best be supported by the functionality of that platform and vice versa. By doing this we ensure that our resource, to go back to Rams, 'concentrates on the essential aspects' and that it is 'not burdened with non-essentials'.[97] Ideally, then, in the case of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* I wanted a platform that would allow around three thousand wood engraved illustrations to take centre stage and to work in symbiotic harmony with that platform's functionality. I wanted to suit the image to the action and the action to the image.

The original plan for this project was that the platform would be the Digital Image Curation Environment (DICE) open-source software.[98] DICE, created in collaboration between Cardiff University's Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research and Sheffield University's Humanities Research Institute, is a web-based tool that enables researchers, institutions, or members of the public to curate, catalogue, and display their own image collections online. DICE would be a simple and effective software solution for my project because it would allow me to 'dramatically [reduce] the technical development costs and timescales associated with similar projects.'[99] Given that the timescale of a PhD is around four years, DICE sounded ideal: it would

[97] Dieter Rams quoted in Sophie Lovell, *Dieter Rams*, p. 23.
[98] For information about DICE, see <http://cardiffbookhistory.wordpress.com/2011/09/17/dmvi-launch> [accessed on 6 May 2016].
[99] Ibid.

give me time to concentrate on curating, digitising and tagging the illustrations without having to worry too much about the technical side of things. I could just focus on getting my image collection online and to the widest possible audience, which was, at the time, my main priority. However, DICE, in its publicly accessible form never materialised, although it currently provides the technological backbone for the highly successful Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration.[100]

According to Albert Einstein (who is, let us not forget, a master of making the complicated simple), 'God does not play dice'. But if He did, He rolled me two sixes with the serendipitous no-show of the Digital Image Curation Environment because it forced me to think more broadly about my work and about using other web-based platforms. Furthermore, this allowed me to take control and theorise every single aspect of my project and to effectively become, and to develop, the skills of a curator, historian, theorist and, significantly, designer. This final role, I have come to understand, is the most crucial because with good design (like good writing) it is far easier to theorise and understand digital practice.

The most extensive treatment of how digital design allows us to create the culture of the future, and the one that has proved most instructive for me is *Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interactive Design as a Cultural Practice* by Janet H. Murray. Murray argues that 'Digital artifacts pervade our lives and the design decisions that shape them affect the way we think, act,

[100] Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration <http://www.dmvi.org.uk> [accessed on 14 August 2014].

understand the world, and communicate with one another.'[101] It is an important argument because what Murray is suggesting is that it is not necessarily the content of a resource that creates meaning but, instead, it is the 'design decisions' that shape that content which goes on to affect wider culture and how that digital object comes to signify. For example, The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* would, despite retaining the same content, be a completely different resource and signify in a different way if I were to upload all the images on to Flickr (to use Terras' example) than it is in its current form. *A digital object, then, creates meaning through and within the wider structure in which it is embedded.* When I began to understand and embrace this concept, it allowed me to begin to think more creatively, and critically, about my own work.

In many ways, however, this realisation was also a frightening prospect. As Murray goes on to observe, one of the main difficulties we face in designing digital resources is that, because the digital is still an immature medium (certainly in comparison to print), we are often 'inventing something for which there is no standard model'.[102] How would it be possible, then, now that I could no longer rely on DICE or another 'standard model' to create a digital archive that would be well designed and provide the end-user with the agency required to navigate through over three thousand illustrations? There may be no standard model, but Murray does provide us with a useful viewpoint about the responsibility of a designer:

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[101] Janet H. Murray, *Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interactive Design as a Cultural Practice* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012), p. 2.
[102] Murray, *Inventing the Medium*, p. 3.

> It is the designer's task to work at all three levels of media making – inscription, transmission, and especially representation – to accelerate the collective project of inventing a new medium by creating and refining the conventions that will bring coherence to new artifacts and enhance their expressive power.[103]

Through reading Murray's work, I realised that, if I was going to design my own archive from the ground up, I needed to 'invent the medium': I needed to create a resource that would be original, exciting, and an intervention into wider digital culture; and foremost in my thoughts when I was searching for potential platforms for my archive was the ability of that platform to 'enhance the expressive power' of the illustrations.

As a teenager, I had taught myself basic html (hypertext mark-up language) and I created a couple of websites, just as a personal challenge more than anything else. I took great pleasure in having to work within the limitations of the language, because not only did it mean I had to think quite imaginatively to create a site that was interesting (as Orson Welles says 'the enemy of art is the absence of limitations'), but it also gave me an understanding about how websites actually work, and what could realistically be achieved in their creation.[104] The remarkable fact about the web, despite the huge advancement in technology and broadband speed in the past

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[103] Murray, *Inventing the Medium,* p. 39.
[104] Orsons Welles quoted in Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (California: Museum 2.0, 2010), p. 23.

twenty-five years, is that it still functions, fundamentally, in exactly the same way as it did when Tim Berners-Lee invented it in 1989: through hyperlinks. I knew that my programming ability would not be sufficient to allow me to write code for any potential website, but, spurred on by my experience of the web as a teenager, curiousity, and the knowledge that the web works in exactly the same way as it always has, I began to think that maybe, with a bit of imagination and forethought, I could use one of the many blog services to build my archive. Working within the confines of a blog site would, perhaps, force me to use my creative resourcefulness and ingenuity to construct a website that could enhance the 'expressive power' of the illustrations whilst at the same time, I could, potentially invent a new kind of resource that was at once aimed both at scholars and the general public. It was also an opportunity to demonstrate that digital humanities projects do not have to be hugely expensive endeavours: by using 'off the shelf' software I hoped to establish and validate a different kind of model for digital archival work.

The first step towards these admittedly ambitious aims was to find an appropriate web-based platform. My first instinct was to re-investigate Drupal. As part of the work my colleagues and I had undertaken as members of the *Forms of Innovation* initiative, we designed a website using the Drupal content-management system.[105] It was a deeply arduous task, and I do not think any of us were happy with the final result. The main problem was that we wanted something that was going to represent the core ideal of the group, which was that the web is changing the way we do research and our

[105] Drupal Website <www.drupal.org.uk> [accessed on 12 August 2014]. Sadly, the *Forms of Innovation* website is no longer active.

relationship to literary texts. We all wanted the site to be innovative. In the end, none of us had the time or skill to get the best out of Drupal and the site remained as a promotional space to inform researchers about the series of workshops we held. Nevertheless, Drupal was the first development tool I looked at in regards to the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*. Drupal is a tremendously powerful tool, and it runs a number of successful and prestigious websites including whitehouse.gov, stanford.edu and washingtonpost.com. However, after a couple of days of trying to work with the system, I decided that the learning curve would just be too great given the timescale of the project and the principles of good design that I wanted to incorporate into my work. If I had decided to use Drupal, I would not have been creating simplicity from complexity: it would have been more like creating something very unwieldly and not particularly user friendly.

If Drupal was too complex for the timescale I had to complete my project, then Weebly, the next platform I explored, was too simple. Weebly can create some stunning websites, and, when I first began to play around with the service, I was very excited. Here at last, I thought, was a system that could enhance the expressive value of the illustrations. Weebly uses a very intuitive 'Drag and Drop' system for the creation of websites. This allows a designer to build up their website in real time, and to make changes and add elements in an instinctive way. I initially uploaded and created a gallery of the illustrations taken from John Gilbert's *Twelfth Night*, and they looked sensational. Not only were the illustrations aesthetically pleasing, but also a user could easily navigate between them and view them either as a slide

show or as individual images. But … that was all they could do. The main problem with Weebly was that, while it allowed me to create a wonderful looking site, it simply did not have the functionality that would enable it to be useful for researchers, especially researchers interested in word and image.

So far in this discussion I have been focusing primarily on the pictorial quality of the illustrations and marginalising the fact that these works also function *textually.* Illustration is a bi-medial art form that generates meaning through the dialectic between word and image, and we can use the structure of the digital archive to interrogate this. As Thomas asserts in 'Getting the Picture: Word and Image in the Digital Archive':

> The development of the systems that allow pictures to be searched marks an encounter with the theoretical that defines the archive and its construction as a critical practice. In this sense, the archive is never simply a means to an end: it makes material available, but the way in which it undertakes this process invites a reassessment of critical assumptions. In its juxtaposition of words and pictures, the archive impacts on the meanings and position of the visual image, inviting an exploration of the extent to which the visual can be accounted for, described, or even replaced, by the textual.[106]

The problem with Weebly was that it did not allow for this 'reassessment of critical assumptions'. While it *did* allow for the illustrations to be strikingly presented within a very modern looking website, it did not provide the same

[106] Julia Thomas, 'Getting the Picture: Word and Image in the Digital Archive', *European Journal of English Studies*, 11 (2007), 193-206 (p. 195).

sophistication in its tagging and keywording of them. This meant that the user of the archive would never be surprised by interesting juxtapositions between the images. For example, whilst a user would not have any difficulty in finding Kenny Meadows' illustrations from *The Tempest*, those illustrations would exist in isolation from all the others in the archive. A user would not even be able to make a relatively simple comparison between different illustrators' interpretations of that same play, let alone make associations between iconographic features like 'magic' or 'shipwrecks'. It was precisely because I wanted to find connections across a corpus of Victorian Shakespeare illustration and explore the 'extent to which the visual can be accounted for, described, or even replaced, by the textual', that meant Weebly, as a platform for my project was, unfortunately, inadequate. My experience with Weebly, however, was not wasted as it was this new heightened awareness of textuality that led me to work with the appropriately named WordPress.

I had used WordPress before. After my MA and in my desire to create a 'web presence' for myself I made a site using WordPress called 'Curious Rainbows' (now, sadly, defunct). The aim of this very simple blog was to upload essays, papers, ideas and thoughts that I felt people may be interested in. And for a good few months it was very exciting to publish a piece of work on this platform and to initiate a dialogue with the wider blogging community. At the time, I had never considered that it would be possible to use the same system to host the doctoral project I was working on. For me WordPress, as the name implies, was all about *words* and providing people with an outlet to voice their opinions. As I understood it, the system had very

little to offer in the way of exhibiting images. I was aware, though, that Kathleen Fitzpatrick, as she recounts in *Planned Obsolescence*, had used WordPress as a tool to experiment with open peer review, so the idea of using the platform for scholarly work was not unheard of.[107] The advantage of WordPress is its ability to use 'categories' and 'tags' for just about anything. This means that WordPress provides both site creators and users with a very intuitive and helpful way of organising and finding information. And sometimes, when we have categorised a blog post, for example, it can surprise us by creating interesting juxtapositions with other material on the site which shares the same category. After a few months of contributing to 'Curious Rainbows' I noticed that one of the papers I had put up about Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* shared the same category with a paper I had given about Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday*: 'Terror'. This came about because *Saturday* as a post-9/11 novel was linked with Falstaff, who, in Shakespeare's comedy, 'terrorises' the people of Windsor with his lascivious ways. It was a disconcerting association of two completely different texts, the only element previously connecting them being that I studied both for my MA. And it was this strange juxtaposition that was at the forefront of my mind when I began to explore WordPress as the potential platform for the creation of a visual archive.

Exploring WordPress

WordPress was initially released in 2003 as a relatively simple piece of

[107] Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), pp. 33-35.

blogging software. Over the past decade, the platform has become one of the most popular content management systems on the web, powering more than 17% of all websites.[108] It is open source software, which means that it can be freely used and modified by anyone in the world, and it currently has thousands of people working on widgets and plug-ins for the system.[109] The underlying structure of WordPress is built on the scripting language PHP and the relational database management system of MySQL.[110] As a tool, it provides great flexibility, and, although I am slightly sceptical about the WordPress website claim that it is 'only limited by your imagination', it does, nevertheless, allow for the creation of powerful and intuitive websites.[111]

When I began to experiment with WordPress as the platform for my archive, I realised fairly quickly that it had the potential to fulfill all the design and scholarly aims that I have outlined above. Whilst there would be a slight learning curve (the software was not as user-friendly as Weebly, for example), the versatility of the platform was very appealing. My initial fear about using WordPress, however, was that I did not want my site to look like a blog. This was not because I have anything against blogs, but because this was not what my project is, or what I wanted it to be. I did some research on the web into WordPress sites ran by photographers, as I assumed that photographers would, like me, want to highlight the visual aspect of their work, and I also felt that, perhaps more than other group of WordPress user, photographers may

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[108] See WordPress Features Page <www.wordpress.org/about/features> [accessed on 12 August 2014].
[109] Open Source Website <www.opensource.org> [accessed on 12 August 2014].
[110] PHP Website <www.php.net>; My SQL Website <mysql.com> [accessed on 12 August 2014].
[111] WordPress About Page <www.wordpress.org/about> [accessed on 12 August 2014].

be more inclined to incorporate a design ethos in their sites.

What I found from this research was that none of these sites looked like a blog. In fact, I was very surprised that they were created with WordPress at all, such was the skill and thought behind some of the designs. Most importantly, though, was that, by browsing through some examples of photography sites, I began to understand that it would indeed be possible to use this platform to foreground the illustrations and create a site that could emphasise the visual. What I did not want was for the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* to be 'text heavy'. This was, after all, a *visual* archive. By emphasising the *visuality* of the illustrations, I would also be making a comment about the historical importance of these images and how they have been critically neglected. As Thomas writes about her own project, the *Illustration Archive*, 'Our motivation came from the fact that, despite their cultural importance, the images that adorned eighteenth and nineteenth century books have largely disappeared from view.'[112]

One of the most attractive aspects of WordPress for both beginner and experienced web designers is that it uses a system called 'Themes'. Themes is the reason why so many WordPress sites look similar: a user chooses a theme (there are thousands, and more are added daily) which then structures both visually and textually the entire website. This means that the user only has to worry about the content of the site. This obviously has it negatives: it becomes difficult to differentiate one site from any other, and, also, a user's agency to customize their work is minimalised. The positive side of this,

[112] Julia Thomas, 'About', <http://illustrationarchive.cf.ac.uk/about_us> [accessed on 26 August 2015].

however, is that it creates a fairly intuitive environment that allows users to publish their ideas.

As I began to explore the various themes, I become fearful that my site would end up looking and behaving like countless others. One of the aims of this project was not to just get the illustrations digitised and online, but also to create an intuitive interface for the work that could be used by both researchers and the general public. In short, it had to be attractive *and* functional. The problem with using the themes was that most of them, to my eyes at least, were quite cluttered with *unattractive* or superfluous elements that would make any eventual site look 'amateurish'. I wanted clean and simple, but some of the themes I experimented with would overwhelm an end-user with a mixture of text and image, or, as is understandable for what is blogging platform, be far too 'text-based'. The design principles of Dieter Rams were becoming a distant memory.

Why, then, did I persevere in testing out various themes? Well, I think, in hindsight, part of the appeal was these very limitations, which forced me to think more creatively and inventively. I was sure that if I could find a theme that was adequate, I would be able to work *with* it and create an original digital archive. I convinced myself that if I kept browsing I would be able to find a theme that would allow me to achieve all my aims in this project. After trialling about ten different themes that would, to a certain extent, allow me to produce a reasonable digital resource, I discovered the 'Hatch' theme.

I am not clear why it is called 'Hatch', but the theme caught my eye because it is a 'portfolio' theme allowing a user (usually a photographer, artist,

fashion designer) to display their work in an elegant and sophisticated way. It works by displaying all the images that a user has uploaded onto their site in a grid. This grid then also functions as that site's homepage. So an end-user visiting, for example, a fashion designer's site that uses this theme, will be greeted by a grid with every design that designer has uploaded. Each design is given its own small rectangle in the grid, and if the designer has given the design a title then by hovering the mouse cursor over the rectangle will display that title. For example, if I was using this site and I saw a shirt that I liked in the rectangle, by rolling the mouse over it, it would then say 'White Shirt'. Furthermore, by clicking on the image of the white shirt the site would take me to a page where I could see a bigger and more detailed image of the shirt. This theme was absolutely perfect for my needs, and within a couple of days of playing around with the WordPress system, I had discovered the template that would soon underpin the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*.

The learning curve for WordPress, whilst nowhere near as difficult as learning how to code, or the aforementioned Drupal, can be quite steep, especially if the user wants to do more than just blog. What was valuable about my experience with WordPress was that it forced me to understand all of its quirks and the way it works. It developed my skills as designer, academic, and digital humanist. The first major challenge I faced when I decided to use the Hatch theme was that I did not want the grid to be my homepage. In WordPress, what is called the 'blog roll' is, by default, the homepage. This means that whenever you 'post' something onto your site it

automatically gets put onto your homepage, with the latest post coming 'top' because the system works chronologically. Again, this would have been useful if I was blogging, but I was not: I was trying to create a digital archive that would have blogging features. At the time when I was working through the design of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, I found WordPress's constant emphasis on blogging immensely frustrating. Why would it not just let me do what I wanted? It was only when I had a few illustrations uploaded and I was playing around with the site that I realised that what makes the archive so unique and interesting is precisely this constant interplay and productive tension between being a blog and an archive. I will discuss this further below.

It would not have been the end of the world if the grid had had to remain as the homepage. All the illustrations would be uploaded anyway, and whilst it was not an ideal solution, maybe the grid as the homepage was the best I could hope for. As I become more aware of the way WordPress worked, though, I found out that I could make the 'blog roll' (the grid) a 'normal' page and I could create my own homepage. WordPress works, fundamentally, through 'Pages' and 'Posts': Pages are the parts of the site you want to remain static (an 'about' section, for example). Pages do not use tags or categories. Posts are self-explanatory: they are what is uploaded to the site and they go straight into the 'blog roll' chronologically, and can be tagged or categorised. Posts therefore inevitably form the content of that site.

The default homepage setting in WordPress (and other blogging platforms) displays the 'blog roll', the latest posts that have been published on

the site. I was delighted when I was exploring WordPress's settings and discovered that this did not have to be the case. I could set the blog roll as a normal page and change the settings of that page to private so that it would be inaccessible to users. Slowly, the site was becoming less like a blog and more like an archive. At the same time, the site would also have all the benefits of being on a blogging platform, such as social media integration. I cannot underestimate the importance this had on my project: being able to create the homepage I wanted and to begin to see the archive take shape was a tremendous feeling. By reimaging the traditional blog site as an archive and the archive as blog meant that not only would the content of this project be unique (Victorian Shakespeare illustration), but its very form would also be original. It felt like after all this time, after all the days spent digitising, exploring platforms and discussing my work with colleagues, the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* was no longer a hypothetical concept: it was there on the computer screen, accessible from any computer in the world. Even my very first one.

In Remembrance of Things Past

I first owned a computer (or, I should say, my family owned a computer) back in the mid-nineties, and, like so many of my contemporaries it was bought under the auspices of it being beneficial for schoolwork. There was simply no way I was going to get through the all-important 'Key stage 3', I earnestly informed Mum and Dad, without being able to word-process and print out coursework. Of course, I did not tell Mum and Dad that my primary motive in

wanting a computer was to be able to play the latest computer games. Nevertheless, I am reminded of this first computer (an Evesham Intel Pentium 100 with Windows 95) as I write this chapter because what is interesting about it historically is how it was marketed, and how, in the five years that it was resident in the house, it saw many technological changes that remain with us today.

I remember going through the magazine *PC Advisor* with my Dad and deciding on the computer we thought would be best for the 'development of my education', and staring at the advert in the magazine for what felt like forever as I awaited the computer to be delivered. This was not any old computer. Certainly not like the RM Nimbuses we had at school that simply allowed us to use Microsoft *Word* and do little else. This was, as the advert effusively proclaimed, a *multimedia machine*: it had a soundcard, speakers, a graphics card which could show video, a high resolution monitor, and most importantly it had a *CD drive* and came bundled with a stack of CD-ROMs (like Proust and the madeleines, I only have to hear the word CD-ROM and I'm transported back to the mid-nineties), including Microsoft's *Fine Artist* and, significantly, Microsoft's *Encarta*.[113]

Encarta was, for me, revelatory. I spent hours browsing this digital encyclopedia, reading articles on the causes of the First World War, and listening to a thirty-second audio file of a song called *Changes* by a strange singer-songwriter I had never heard of called David Bowie. It amazed me that

[113] *Fine Artist* (Seattle: Microsoft, 1993) [On CD-ROM]. In many ways *Encarta* single handedly legitimised digital, as opposed to print-based, knowledge. For a brief overview into this issue see, Anders Bylad, 'Wikipedia Didn't Kill Britannica Windows Did', <http://www.wired.com/2012/03/wikipedia-didnt-kill-brittanica-windows-did> [accessed 11 November 2014].

such a resource could exist and could actually fit on a CD: it felt like this was the future.[114] No less impressive was actually being able to watch thirty-second video clips of important moments from history such as Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. *Encarta*, for the fourteen year old me, felt infinite. An infinite archive of knowledge, presented in the form of words, pictures, video, sound and text. If the computer my parents had bought for the family was indeed 'multimedia', then *Encarta* was the application that demonstrated exactly what multimedia meant and I found it dazzling. It is with some astonishment in researching this chapter, then, that I find that Encarta was not infinite at all, and 'only' contained 50,000 articles. This is in comparison today with English Wikipedia's 4,648,117. Wikipedia is still not infinite but it is more 'infinite' than the entries in *Encarta*.

I have dwelt over the term 'multimedia' because it is only since working on the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* and talking to other Digital Humanists that I have started to use and hear this term again for the first time in more than a decade. It strikes me that because of the ubiquity of multimedia in today's culture we no longer define anything as multimedia because everything, from television, to music, even our own mobile phones, has become a medium that encompasses different media. In other words, as a society, we have *naturalised* multimedia. In the mid-nineties, we needed a word to describe this new world of computers that could effortlessly juxtapose different media. Whilst the word 'multimedia' has been around since the 1960s, it was only in the 1990s that it became part of general vocabulary and

[114] A CD-ROM could contain around 700 mega-bytes.

at the same time almost synonymous with computing. In fact, there is direct correlation between the rise of technology in our culture in the past twenty years and the decline of the use of this once ever-present word.

A quick look at Google's Ngram Viewer allows us to explore this.[115] Whilst the use of Ngram Viewer can be problematic to 'prove' an argument, I use it here in the spirit of curiosity. What we see in the Ngram, which sadly only goes up to the year 2000, is a sharp rise in the term 'multimedia' throughout the 1990s reaching a peak in 1999, and then, suddenly, for the first time in over a decade, the usage of the word begins to decline. I suggest that this would be the trend for much of the 2000s, but I also propose that we would see the term begin to rise again by the end of that decade, perhaps only slightly, with the so called 'digital turn' in the academy. If this is indeed the case, digital humanists are using the term in much the same way as it was used in the 1990s: to separate what has gone before with what is happening in the present. Just fifteen years ago it would have been inconceivable, both institutionally and practically, to work on a 'multimedia' academic project, certainly within the discipline of English Literature. It would have been 'taken for granted' that, if you were based within that field, then you would probably be creating work solely in the medium of print. Just as my family's computer was sold as a 'multimedia machine' in order to differentiate it from the more austere applications of digital technology that preceded it (that is word processing), so we see digital humanists using the term 'multimedia' as a way of *differentiating* themselves from the print-based past of the Academy.

[115] Google Ngram Viewer <https://books.google.com/ngrams> [accessed on 14 August 2014].

Importantly, however, as Jerome McGann has acknowledged, multimedia work done within the humanities 'rarely engages those questions about interpretation and self-aware reflection that are the central concerns for most humanities scholars and educators.'[116] The challenge, then, for digital humanists working with 'multimedia' is to create original digital work that helps us better to understand digital and critical practice through a constant process of reflecting upon and critiquing that work. In effect, our primary text in such work is a text (or cultural artefact) that we have *created ourselves*. The researcher is transformed from a critic into a critic-artist.

The model of research proposed by McGann, and the one I have followed in this thesis, changes the relationship between scholars and their material. It is through working on a multimedia project like the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* that I have come to understand and appreciate how digital work can enable an exploration of what makes 'research' to take place. As Victoria Vesna observes, 'Archives and databases offer artists a vehicle for commenting on cultural and institutional practices though direct intervention'.[117] I would argue that such digital work is liberating because through 'direct intervention', it offers an alternative model for knowledge generation that consequently upsets the monograph as the cultural (and institutional) signifier of knowledge.

It is a point N. Katherine Hayles implicitly raises in in *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Techogenesis*:

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[116] McGann, *Radiant Textuality*, p. 12.
[117] Victoria Vesna, *Database Aesthetics: Art in the Age of Information Overflow* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. xi.

> databases in Digital Humanities projects shifts the emphasis from argumentation – a rhetorical form that historically has foregrounded context, crafted prose, logical relationships, and audience response – to data elements embedded in forms in which the structure and parameters embody significant implications.[118]

In a similar way to how the digital has allowed us to understand and appreciate the book as a piece of 'technology', the digital is also allowing us to question the *mythos* of traditional humanities work. As Kathleen Fitzpatrick points out in *Planned Obsolescence*, digital technology requires us to think differently about what it is we're doing when we write.[119]

But just because the *emphasis* has changed in digital archival work this does not mean that a much more subtle and complex level of argumentation does not take place. As Hayles goes on to write:

> Databases are not necessarily more objective than arguments, but they are different kinds of cultural forms, embodying different cognitive, technical, psychological, and artistic modalities and offering different ways to instantiate concepts, structure experience, and embody values.[120]

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[118] Hayles, *How We Think*, p. 32.
[119] Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence*, p. 16.
[120] Hayles, *How We Think*, p. 34.

In the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, for example, I have attempted to argue *pictorially* through the elements that make up the archive, through their various juxtapositions, and by the foregrounding of the illustrations themselves, that digital archives are never *transparent* windows onto the past: they are always highly mediated interpretations of a past that is no longer available for us to experience. By foregrounding the illustrations in the archive and by emphasising the need to look and observe and by trusting users to navigate their own way through the database, I hope to have created a new kind of work that argues for and celebrates both digital and visual culture. Whether I have succeeded or not is obviously open to debate, but what the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* represents is an attempt to engage with this concept of non-discursive pictorial argumentation/commentary. Victoria Vesna articulates this stance when she writes that:

> Artists working with the internet as a medium are concerned essentially with the creation of a new type of aesthetic that involves not only a visual representation but invisible aspects of organization, retrieval, and navigation as well. Data are the raw forms that are shaped and used to build architectures of knowledge exchange and serve also as an active commentary on the environment they depend on – the vast, intricate network with its many faces.[121]

[121] Vesna, *Database Aesthetics*, p. xiii.

As a cultural form, then, the database/archive can allow artist-critics to express themselves in an entirely new way.

However, as is the case with Roland Barthes' concept of the 'Death of the Author', the creator of a digital archive is not the final arbiter of its signifying practices and overall meaning.[122] A digital archive is, by definition, a *collage of quotations* and, and represents the 'multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash' that Barthes so eloquently writes about in his famous essay.[123] Digital archives, in a way analogous to photo-montage, make explicit this 'multi-dimensional space' and challenge us once again to confront the questions 'What is an Author' and 'what is a text'? As such, they demand that we interrogate them for the meanings and ideologies inscribed in their structures. If, when Barthes was writing in 1967, the death of the Author was the cost to be paid for the birth of the *reader*, in the digital world the death of the Author is the cost to be paid for the *birth of the User*. As Margot Lovejoy observes in *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age*: digital 'work takes on a different route in relationship to the viewer who participates in the work's ultimate unfolding.'[124]

What we need, then, at this significant moment in the humanities, where our work is becoming more multimedia based is what I call, following on from Victoria Vesna's book, a kind of aesthetics of the digital archive. This recognises the crucial and critical importance of the triumvirate of design, interface and metadata in the creation of digital archives and how an

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[122] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and translated Stephen Heath (London: Harper Collins UK, 1977), pp. 142-149.
[123] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', p. 146.
[124] Margot Lovejoy, *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), p. 8.

understanding of these three concepts allows us to create better work and to demand more of the many digital resources currently available. Digital archives are only as good as their underlying structures and interfaces: their structure should derive from the individual project, and the project's content and form should exist symbiotically to form part of an aesthetic whole. When archives are thought of in these terms, they are not only more attractive and user-friendly, but when used by scholars, an intelligently designed system can, as we will see, generate new knowledge. Multimedia work should foreground the user as the 'destination' of the archive and it should demonstrate that just as we would not buy or use a scholarly book (or any book) that structured its information inadequately, we should not simply accept digital resources that are poorly designed and constructed. We should stress the importance of reflexivity in the construction of the archive from the initial curatorial stage, where the content of the archive is being decided upon, all the way up to (and after) its online 'publication'. And we should appreciate that at every stage in the creation process decisions are taken which affect the archive's ultimate meaning and how it will eventually signify. Furthermore, we should also foreground 'the Archive' as a cultural and historical construct in its own right and, as such, treat the archive, and its relation to historical 'truth' and 'authenticity', as a concept to be played with and imaginatively interrogated, or even 'remixed'.

Encarta existed in a radically different technological culture to ours, where such an imaginative interrogation would have been impossible, although it was slowly beginning to emerge. Encarta, in many ways, existing

at a point just before the Web became ubiquitous, could even be seen as the last time a family would need to physically buy an encyclopedia (albeit a digital one). It was a culture that Lawrence Lessig describes as 'read/only'.[125] This culture, usually described as synonymous with 'analog' modes of production invited consumers to passively 'consume' whatever 'product' an organisation presented to us. A 'read-write' culture, by contrast, is usually regarded as synonymous with the digital, and allows us not only to produce our own work, but also to 'remix' other peoples'. The ease with which digital technology enables this 'remixing' has had a huge impact on modern culture. From music, films, politics, books, we are flooded with cultural objects that have been digitized and are thus available to 'remix'. The infinite archive that I once thought was represented by Encarta was nothing more than a tiny drop in what has become a vast digital ocean. If an object can be digitised, it can be remixed, stored and placed into new contexts, such as a digital archive. As a consequence, it seems to me, that we are all suffering from a condition that Jacques Derrida would describe as 'Archive Fever'. The next chapter will analyse Derrida's work alongside that of Sigmund Freud, the art critic John Berger and other key writers of poststructuralist thought in order to interrogate how digital archives create meaning.

[125] Lawrence Lessig, *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* (New York: Penguin, 2008), p. 28.

2

The**Differance**Engine

> The desire of representation exists only insofar as it never be fulfilled, insofar as the original always be deferred. It is only in the absence of the original that representation may take place.
>
> Donald Crimp[1]

> In theory, repetition, simulation, copying may be the midwives of sameness. In practice, they tend the subtle womb of difference.
>
> Terence Hawkes[2]

Archive Fever

Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression is a peculiar book, even by Jacques Derrida's esoteric standards.[3] Based on a lecture he gave at the Freud House in London in 1994, *Archive Fever*, or *Mal d'archive*, to give it its French title, is

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[1] Donald Crimp, 'The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism', *October,* 5 (1980), 91-101 (p. 98).
[2] Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present,* p.132.
[3] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995).

an investigation into the Western desire for beginnings and origins as seen through the prism of Freudian psychoanalysis. After all, the key concept of Freud's work is the 'talking cure', the idea that relating the origin of a psychological symptom and repeating that trauma to a psychoanalyst will allow a patient to 'cure' themselves. According to Derrida, archive fever, is a psychological phenomenon where the main symptoms are:

> to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.[4]

Carolyn Steedman, moreover, asserts that Derrida understands and uses the concept of the 'archive', or the *arkhe*, to explore the space where 'things begin, where power originates, its workings inextricably bound up with the authority of beginnings and starting points' and where archive fever is a 'desire to find, or locate, or possess that moment or origin, as the beginning of things.'[5] Archive fever, then, is about beginnings and our desire to return to those moments.

But Steedman also goes on to observe that 'Psycho-analysis ought to revolutionise archival questions, dealing as it does with the repression *and* reading of records.'[6] The language both Derrida and Steedman use here,

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[4] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 91.
[5] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 1-3.
[6] Steedman, *Dust*, p. 8.

'repetitive', 'homesickness', 'return' 'repression', is, obviously, Freudian, but, more specifically, it is the language of the Freud of 'The Uncanny', 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' and his late and controversial concept of the 'Death Drive'.[7] If, as both Derrida and Steedman contend, psychoanalysis can be used as a way of better understanding 'physical' archives, then what are the implications of this for the way we think about and design digital archives? More pertinently, for this discussion, what are the implications of failing to acknowledge the importance psychoanalysis plays for the user and designer of a *visual* digital archive? Finally, where Derrida understood archives to exist in what we have called a 'read-only' culture – a researcher would have to *go* to an archive that had been curated by an archivist or the State – we now live in a 'read/write' world where anyone can potentially create their own archives.[8] Archive fever, then, is no longer just about the desire to return to the 'most archaic place of commencement', but it is, instead, thanks to digital technology, the desire to create (and shape) our very own archives, histories and narratives.

With this transformation, the relationship between the public and private has become more entwined and problematised. As if to foreshadow this new relationship, it is important to understand and not to underestimate the significance of *where* Derrida delivered his lecture in 1994: the Freud's family home in London, which had by now been turned into the Freud Museum containing Freud's own library and archive. This was an example of

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[7] Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey et al., 24 Vols. (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–73), Vol. XVII (1917–19), pp. 217-257; Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Standard Edition*, Vol. XVIII (1920–22), pp. 7-64.
[8] Lessig, *Remix*, p. 28.

the public being allowed *into* someone's private home and the private home opening itself up to the public – on this specific occasion the public had, appropriately, gathered to hear a discussion about the archives and psychoanalysis. In today's digital world, whilst anyone can create their own personal archive, it is now possible for these archives to reach an audience of potentially billions. So, whilst it has never been easier to establish an archive, it has also never previously been possible to reach such a vast audience.

This is where Freud's work can prove revelatory in our understanding of digital archives. In 'The "Uncanny"', a mercurial text about a mercurial subject, Freud investigates why certain conditions produce an uncanny effect and concludes that what makes the uncanny such a potent sensation is because it is tied to when something hidden (or repressed) from our past is revealed to us in a new way. For Samuel Weber, the uncanny represents 'a certain indecidabilility which affects and infects representations, motifs, themes and situations, which […] always mean something other than they are.'[9] The digital remix culture that we are currently experiencing produces all manner of uncanny affects across a wide range of cultural genres, a recent example being an advert for Galaxy chocolate that uses computer generated graphics to 'resurrect' Audrey Hepburn.

The advert sees 'Audrey' riding in a busy bus in Italy. When a man stops next to the bus in a convertible, 'Audrey' jumps out, playfully steals the cap of the bus driver, and gets in the back seat of the man's car before happily munching on a bar of Galaxy. What is incredible about this advert,

[9] Samuel Weber quoted in Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 15.

alongside the recreation of Hepburn herself, is that it remixes every signifier we have come to associate with the actress but with an uncanny difference. For example, the advert is set in Italy and is presumably meant to recall her film *Roman Holiday*. But whereas that film was shot in black and white, this advert is shot in colour. This use of colour is interesting because the director quite deliberately uses the saturated tones of 1950s Technicolor to recall other Hepburn films from that era such as *Breakfast at Tiffany's* or *Charade*. Over this exciting piece of drama, the soundtrack plays the song Hepburn is most famous for, 'Moon River', a song that did not appear in *Roman Holiday*, but *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. The final, and most troubling aspect of this remix (and the advert generally), is that it sees 'Audrey', who had a notoriously difficult relationship with food of any sort, eating, and her public image being used to sell chocolate.

What we effectively have, then, is a photo-realistic computer-generated actress 'starring' in an advert that uses motifs from Audrey Hepburn's most famous films (colour, location, theme) juxtaposed and coalescing in a way that they never did in Hepburn's 'real' films. Added to this, we have the very real 'voice' of Hepburn, removed from its original context (and from its time and place), singing over the action in an attempt to sell us a product that Hepburn would have likely had a problematic relationship with. The advert is a striking example of the uncanny as Freud understands it. First, there is 'the recurrence of the same situation, but which differ[s] radically from it in other respects'.[10] And, second:

[10] Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 237.

> the uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes, and so on.[11]

The advert makes us (or me, at least), feel uncomfortable. The advert forces us to question what is real and what is computer generated. And, at the same time, the meanings it produces always mean something, as Samuel Weber has articulated, other than they are.

In an article in *The Guardian*, Mike McGee, the creative director of Framestore, the company that created the advert, explains: 'It's not every day you're asked to bring dead celebrities back from the grave, but in our line of work, it's becoming more common'.[12] This may be true in the advertising business, but it is what we do every day in English Literature departments. Whether it is creating a new edition of the works of Virginia Woolf, or creating a digital archive of Shakespeare illustrations, we are all concerned with bringing the past back to life. And we have to deal with the impossibility of it: the closer we get to the past, the more it slips away from us and challenges us to recognise that our culture might be uncannily haunted by the cultures of the past, ever present but unattainable, there-but-not-there. Much like

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[11] Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 244.
[12] Mike McGee, 'How we Resurrected Audrey HepburnTM for the Galaxy Chocolate Ad', in *The Guardian*, 8 October 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2014/oct/08/how-we-made-audrey-hepburn-galaxy-ad> [accessed on 18 April 2015].

Derrida's concept of archive fever, we desire to return to that point of origin of our study. Whether we are Medievalists, Early Modernists or Victorianists, every time we begin to research a new topic or write about our interpretations of the period the desire is to somehow return to that era, even though we can never return, never get back home; we are confined both physically and intellectually by the present. But, it would seem, we *repeat* this cycle over and over again because we are never satisfied with what we have discovered. There is always something lacking.

The example of the Audrey Hepburn advert is significant in that it very clearly demonstrates the central aspects of Freud's concept of the uncanny writ large on television screens across the country. There is, first, the idea of repetition (albeit with a difference) and the 'return of the dead,' in this case, the 'resurrected' Hepburn.[13] The other two aspects of the advert that adhere mostly to Freud's thought is the sense of making the familiar strange: the infiltration of the unheimlich (un-homely) into the heimlich (home). Of course, we are familiar with Audrey Hepburn and her films, but by placing various familiar Hepburn signifiers into a radically new context, the advert creates an unnerving sensation in the audience that is uncanny. This sense of the uncanny is heightened at the end of the advert when we discover that it is about Galaxy chocolate. Indeed, there is a ridiculous and monstrous incongruity about the fact that so much time and technological effort has gone into recreating Audrey Hepburn and her Hepburnian world merely to sell us something as banal as chocolate. But even here the advert demonstrates its

[13] Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 247.

uncanny quality as the banal, homely familiarity of the chocolate has somehow been infiltrated by the unhomeliness of a computer generated Audrey Hepburn.

Shakespeare, of course, understood that repetition, doubling and the copy could produce unnerving effects. His use of twins, or girls dressed as boys, throughout his comedies of the 1590s, created moments of great pleasure and hilarity for audience members but would often result in terrifying realisations for the characters on the stage. This form of comedy reaches its peak in *Twelfth Night* where in the final act a confused Orsino, on seeing Sebastian and his twin, Viola, cries out 'a natural perspective, that is and is not!'[14] *Is and is not*: a description of the uncanny, and a perfect description of the digital image and its relationship to its 'original'.

I began this chapter with an epigraph by Terrence Hawkes and Donald Crimp. We shall look more at Crimp and representation shortly; for now, I wish to focus on Terence Hawkes and his collection of essays, *Shakespeare in the Present*.[15] When I discovered this text (along with work by Catherine Belsey), I was hugely excited as I felt at last there was a critic who was articulating exactly the way I felt about how we should study not only Shakespeare, but also *any* text. In the book, Hawkes argues for a new critical approach to studying Shakespeare, one that foregrounds our position in the present as a means of understanding and critically engaging with Shakespeare's plays. Hawkes reasons that 'the critic's own "situatedness" does not – cannot –

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[14] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works,* pp. 691-714 (5.1. l. 214). All further references are to this edition of *Twelfth Night* and line numbers are presented parenthetically in the body of the text.
[15] Terence Hawkes, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare in the Present* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-5 (p. 3).

contaminate the past. In effect, it constitutes the only means by which it's possible to see the past and perhaps comprehend it.'[16] Moreover, 'The present ranks, not as an obstacle to be avoided, nor as a prison to be escaped from. Quite the reverse: it's a factor actively to be sought out, grasped and perhaps, as a result, understood.[17] These observations resonated strongly with me because of my work with the digital. The question of how we make sense of Victorian Shakespeare illustration in the digital world of today struck me (as it still does) as far more pertinent and significant a topic for research than the more 'traditional' scholarly thesis which would historicise these illustrations in their own contemporary context.

What is so remarkable about Hawkes' work is that on so many occasions he is grasping for a new critical practice that the digital humanities could have potentially answered, yet Hawkes never mentions the digital, despite the fact that he would have witnessed profound shifts in technology and the cultural and institutional effects of it (Hawkes died in 2014, aged 81). The digital, in fact, is the ghostly supplement that haunts Hawkes's text: ever present but never there, waiting for Hawkes to make it visible. It is probably not a surprise, then, that the essay where Hawkes outlines a new form of criticism is called 'The Unheimlich Manouvre'.[18] He writes:

> I have in mind a criticism not merely anxious to raise the spectre of the *unheimlich*, but also intent, not on nullifying it, but on somehow

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Terence Hawkes, 'The Unheimlich Manouvre', in *Shakespeare in the Present*, pp. 6-22.

> including and promoting it within the material it examines – indeed of openly scrutinising those elements that its initial impulse is to try and occlude or swallow. […] Such a project absolves criticism from any commitment to the tetchy pursuit of true judgement or, worse, the soul-gelding aridity of *quellenforschung* (investigation of sources). Instead it turns into a creative genre in its own right; one whose fundamental mode is a sort of pre-emptive repetition: a matter […] of getting the repetition in first: its central feature the active identifying, confronting and *using* of the *unheimlich*. […] Its project is scrupulously to seek out salient aspects of the present as a crucial trigger for its investigations. […] It calls for a heightened degree of critical self-awareness'[19]

Reading this quotation now, it feels to me like my own thesis mission statement. It sets out everything I have tried to achieve both with the digital archive itself and this thesis (perhaps the archive's own supplement). Obviously, this thesis itself represents a degree of critical self-awareness, but what I have tried to address is how this critical self-awareness has manifested itself into and shaped the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*. The archive itself, I argue, is no less a critical intervention than a scholarly article or monograph and it has sought in its very construction to engage with the issues of representation and presentism outlined above.

Significantly, however, the archive has also aimed to promote, through both content and web platform, the 'spectre of the unheimlich' as outlined by

[19] Hawkes, 'The Unheimlich Manouvre', pp. 20-22.

Hawkes. When I have demonstrated the archive at conferences or to friends, they are often undecided about whether the illustrations are new or old and, revealingly, they cannot even decide whether this is a good or bad thing. Of course, the unheimlich effect created in a user of the archive lies in the fact that the illustrations are both old *and* new *at the same time*. The construction of the archive is, indeed, the creative genre that Hawkes hypothesizes: what else is a Photoshopped digital image of a Victorian Shakespeare illustration other than a pre-emptive repetition whose central feature is the 'active identifying, confronting and *using* of the *unheimlich*'? The importance of the Digital Humanities, then, and work such as mine, is that it does allow us to envision and appreciate the creation of a digital archive not just as a valid means of scholarly research but also as a means of self-expression.

From a theatrical perspective, Bertolt Brecht in 1930s Germany came up with a remarkably similar concept to the uncanny called the 'alienation effect'. As Nicholas Royle writes, 'Brecht does not specifically name it as uncanny, but the effect can clearly be construed in this way.'[20] Brecht's central idea was to turn something familiar into something strange, 'into something peculiar, striking and unexpected'.[21] It was about the breaking of the fourth wall: making his audience not merely passive observers of his plays but part of a creative and critical process where the audience becomes aware of the mediated and constructed stage world. The medium of the stage, like a digital archive, is never 'neutral' but the result of cultural values and

[20] Royle, *The Uncanny*, p. 5.
[21] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht On Theatre*, eds. Steve Giles, Tom Kuhn, Marc Silberman and John Willett, 3rd edn (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014), p. 192.

ideologies. I have attempted something similar to the alienation effect with the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*. This is achieved through the multiple images of the same illustration that the archive presents to the user. There is not one image within a 'set' that we could claim to be the 'correct' one. For example, a user looking at the title page of John Gilbert's *Henry IV* is presented with a thumbnail of the image, a 'cleaned' Photoshopped iteration of the full page, an image of just the illustration that has had the text cropped, and the 'original' image (containing word and image) as it was when it was initially scanned in. The tension and relationship between these multiple representations of the same image subtly challenges users to consider what we mean by a digital image and allows them to question, when they use other digital resources, just how transparent these actually are in enabling an encounter with a past epoch. By using repetition to generate an unheimlich and/or alienation effect, I want a user to begin to question digital representation itself and to understand that the past always comes to us mediated through various ideologies and interpretations, and this is especially so in the hypermediated world of this century.

The final essay in *Shakespeare in the Present* is called 'Speaking to You in English' where Hawkes once again returns to repetition:

> Not only is a 'copy' always and everywhere quite novel, different from that which has been copied, but repetition, or the generation of more of the same, systematically becomes less a stratagem for avoiding change, than the very basis of it: the key to the construction of

> difference. And that involvement in difference makes repetition part of the construction of meaning.[22]

This is why an understanding of design and the effects it can produce is so important and why the WordPress platform was so significant in my attempts to visually articulate some of the above ideas. The platform allowed me not only to display the illustrations but also to link them together in such a way as to allow them to be both 'key to the construction of difference' and the 'construction of meaning'. A digital archive makes meaning not only through its content, but also how that content relates and is linked to the other content in the archive. It is not that the medium is the message and the content unimportant; far from it. It is more how the content is allowed to relate to other content in that *specific* medium that is important. Furthermore, if, as Hawkes suggests, repetition can become the basis of change then digital archives which are, let us not forget, made up of 'repeated' materials in the form of digital images and documents could be at forefront of how we think about the world and knowledge itself.

At the end of the essay Hawkes imagines a culture that places 'second-order forms of communication, such as gesture, posture, dress, style, tone of voice, accent, manner, "way of speaking", to a parity with logic, awarding them a license to challenge the orthodoxies words draw on to sustain a narrow notion of "sense"'.[23] What is so interesting here is that

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[22] Terence Hawkes, 'Conclusion: Speaking to You in English', in *Shakespeare in the Present*, pp. 127-143 (pp. 132-133).
[23] Hawkes, 'Conclusion: Speaking to You in English', p. 134.

Hawkes is calling not for the usurpation of the written word as culture's primary mode of making sense, but the equality of other non-verbal forms of communication with the verbal. The visual and digital culture that we are living in means that we are becoming more and more astute at both reading images and using them to create meanings. A simple example is the social networks Facebook and Instagram where users self-consciously take pictures of their daily lives and post them on the sites for other users to comment upon. There is nothing interesting about many of the pictures, but then, sometimes, there will be one that lodges itself in the memory, like one of my friend dressed up as Audrey Hepburn and sat in the front seat of a white van with a can of lager. The picture was so clever because it subverted all that we have come to associate with the actress, those very associations that the Galaxy chocolate advert tried so hard to establish. Facebook and Instagram, then, in their own ways, are a kind of infinite archive that many people use to store their thoughts, memories and photographs. If we were suffering from Archive Fever before the establishment of these two new social networks, then that fever has suddenly become an epidemic.

Archive Fever is one of the few occasions Derrida engages with electronic technology. Writing at a similar time to when Microsoft were releasing the first versions of Encarta (1993-95, that is just before the Web was becoming ubiquitous), Derrida remarks that if Freud and his colleagues had access to email, and the archiving capabilities of such technology, then it would have transformed the very nature of psychoanalysis. Technology, Derrida argues

> would have made the landscape of the psychoanalytic archive unrecognizable for the past half century if, to limit myself to these indications, Freud, his contemporaries, collaborators and immediate disciples, instead of writing thousands of letters by hand, had had access to MCI or AT&T telephonic credit cards, portable tape recorders, computers, printers, faxes, televisions, teleconferences, and above all E-mail.[24]

In short, 'the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the *archivable* content'.[25] What Derrida did not foresee, however, was that in the following twenty years not only would the nature of the archive itself change (it was no longer just a physical place that held records) but even more radically, perhaps, the *arkhon* (from the Greek meaning 'master'), – the actual archivist himself and the gatekeeper of knowledge and how it was interpreted – would be transformed to the point where everyone with a web connection can now become an archivist and create archives. We are consequently living in an era of Archive Fever and, significantly, we have moved away from the arkhon's house (the *arkheion*), where the records were kept to the archive's new place of residence, the web and, perhaps, a new form of origin: the *home*page.

[24] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 16.
[25] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 17.

Digital Illyrium

Figure 5 The homepage illustration on the *Victorian illustrated Shakespeare Archive.* From *The Works of Shakespeare revised from the best authorities with a memoir, and essay on his genius, by Barry Cornwall: and, annotations and introductory remarks on the plays, by distinguished writers: illustrated with engravings on wood, from designs by Kenny Meadows* Vol. I (1843; London: William S. Orr and Co., 1846), p. 154.

The homepage illustration of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* (figure 5) is a subtle acknowledgement of Derrida's work in *Archive Fever* and elsewhere. When users visits *VISA*, they are greeted with what we could call the 'frontispiece' of the site: an illustration by Kenny Meadows of Act IV from *Twelfth Night*. The illustration depicts the scene where Malvolio, who has been imprisoned in a 'dark room' for believing Olivia is in love with him, is tormented by the clown Feste. To the left of Feste stands Sir Toby who holds his arm across Maria as they listen in, amused, at the outcome of their plan to convince Malvolio that he is mad. To a user who is unfamiliar with the play,

however, the illustration, given its context in a digital archive, is a pictorial representation of visiting the archive itself: the door to the archive is slightly ajar, a man tentatively peers around it to see what treasures await inside, while a man on the other side of the door, protects a woman. Because doors do not just allow things in. They also allow things to come out.

The illustration is typical of Meadows' work: it combines a confident pictorial realisation of Shakespeare's characters with a scene imbued with much dark humour. That Meadows chooses, for example, not to illustrate Malvolio at all, and leaves it to his audience to imagine the poor steward behind the chained door, is characteristic of Meadows' wit and ability as an illustrator to create an interpretive space for his audience. It is a quality that is in Shakespeare's text, certainly, but one that Meadows gleefully emphasises. In this sense the illustration, as representative of the work of my favourite Victorian illustrator of Shakespeare, provides a fitting image to welcome users to the archive.

However, the illustration also functions on what I consider to be a much more suggestive level, a level that recalls Derrida's work on presence and absence and *Archive Fever* itself. The image on the homepage is a subtle visual comment about digital archives, the relationship of 'original' image to its digitised counterpart (representation) and, finally, about how the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* actually functions and creates meaning. Effectively, then, I have tried to encapsulate in a single image what this thesis has attempted to investigate and examine. Like my friend who dressed up as Audrey Hepburn, I have used the visual to make a critical statement: a

statement that begins to point us in different directions for scholarly practice and knowledge creation.

If the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* were to have a subtitle, it would be the same as Shakespeare used for *Twelfth Night*: 'What You Will'. This is because just like the readers or audiences of a play, a user of the archive actively makes and constructs their own meanings and interpretations of what the illustrations might signify. As Terence Hawkes points out in relation to Shakespeare's plays, 'We *us*e them in order to generate meaning. Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we* mean by Shakespeare.[26] A digital archive, then, and certainly one containing Shakespeare illustrations, doesn't *mean* by itself. Like a play, or indeed any text, the illustrations in the archive offer a plurality (perhaps even an infinity) of different meanings that require and challenge a user to make sense of their signifying practices and how these signifying practices resonate and communicate both within themselves and in relation to other modes of representation. As Catherine Belsey has stated, as scholars we very actively *make* what we call history through the stories we write about the past.[27] Perhaps the real significance of a digital archive is, ultimately, that it allows for a direct intervention into this past: it allows old stories to be transformed and new stories (new interpretations) to be made.

Interpretation, and how meaning is generated, is at the heart of my own digital and critical practice. This is one of the reasons why Malvolio (or the lack, thereof) takes centre stage on the homepage of the archive. Malvolio, in

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[26] Terence Hawkes, *Meaning by Shakespeare* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 3.

[27] Catherine Belsey, 'Making Histories Then and Now', in *Shakespeare in Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 119-138 (p. 123).

case we have forgotten, is imprisoned within the 'dark room' because of a simple and very understandable misinterpretation. He reads Maria's letter, believing it is from Olivia: 'M.O.A.I doth sway my life' (II.V. 97) he announces, puzzled, but then proceeds to adopt the role of what we would now call a literary critic:

> what should that alphabetical position portend? […] 'M'. Malvolio – 'M' – why, that begins my name. […] 'M'. But there is no consonancy in the sequel. […] 'A' should follow but 'O' does. […] And then 'I' comes behind. 'M.O.A.I.' This simulation is not as the former; and yet to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in my name.
>
> (2.5. ll. 116-136)

'Yet to crush this a little': as critics, this is what we do all the time. We take a piece of text and fashion it for our own desires or to fit our argument. More importantly, however, for *my argument* and interpretation, Malvolio, here, actually *constructs* meaning. As R.S White has insightfully observed, *Twelfth Night*, 'proclaims that meaning is not found or even decoded, but by effort *made*, as is clear to the stage witnesses of Malvolio's "construction" of the enigmatic and, on the face of it, meaningless letter he receives.'[28] Malvolio constructs a situation in which after reading a letter that *simulates* Olivia's handwriting, he believes his desire to wed her and gain power over the whole

[28] R.S. White, 'Introduction', in *Twelfth Night*: *Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. R.S White (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 1-15 (p. 11).

household will actually become a reality. Malvolio reminds us that how we interpret texts actually has a direct influence on how we understand reality and how the interpretation of texts is often about our own preoccupations, desires and cultural moment. In Maria's letter, Malvolio's own desires are reflected back at him. The same is true for each new generation when they interpret Shakespeare's plays: 'Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we* mean by Shakespeare'.

In C.L. Barber's reading of the play he explains that 'People are caught up by delusions or misapprehensions which take them outside of themselves, bringing out what they would keep hidden or did not know what was there. *Madness* is a key word.[29] Marjorie Garber expands on this sense of madness: 'it means different things to different people and bears upon occasion different names, like "dream" and "wonder"'.[30] The play, like illustration itself (meaning 'bring to light'), and like Freud's concept of the uncanny, is concerned primarily with revealing something that was once hidden: in this case the true identity and history of the characters. It is love and desire that brings about these revelations but only after the major characters go through a period of thinking they are mad or sick. Viola, for example, expresses her illness when Feste the fool asks for Jove to send her a beard. She replies: 'By my troth I'll tell thee, I am almost sick for one.' (III. I. 81). Rosalind from *As You Like It* similarly explains that, 'Love is merely a madness, and I tell you deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are

[29] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 242.
[30] Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), p. 524.

not so punished and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too.'[31] Interestingly, Malvolio is the only major character in *Twelfth Night* who claims he is in love whilst being adamant that he is not mad or sick, perhaps betraying that his true desire for Olivia is not for her as a woman, but instead for the wealth and prestige she can bestow. It is ironic, then, that Malvolio's punishment for believing Olivia is in love with him is to be taken to the 'dark house' that Rosalind speaks of as a cure for his 'madness'. It is a 'madness' that has resulted from ingeniously interpreting a textual document. Malvolio, in effect, is in the grip of Archive Fever.

When he is taken to the dark room Malvolio is, effectively, under house arrest.[32] And this, along with the character's name, recalls Derrida's *Archive Fever*, or as has already been mentioned, the original French title: *Mal d'archive*. Steedman notes that the title of the English translation actually tames Derrida's text, 'with the restricted, monovalent, archaic – and because archaic, faintly comic – "fever" of the English translation'. [33] Whereas our experience of the text changes when we read it in the original French, 'with "mal" (trouble, misfortune, pain, hurt, sickness, wrong, sin, badness, malice, evil…) you will read rather differently from the French version.'[34] In the second chapter of her book, Steedman has great fun with what she calls 'Archive Fever Proper': the actual symptoms that when one spends too long in the

[31] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works,* pp. 627-652 (3.2. ll. 386-390).
[32] For an interesting discussion on this topic, see, Siån Echard, 'House Arrest: Modern Archives, Medieval Manuscripts', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 185-210.
[33] Steedman, *Dust*, p. 9.
[34] Ibid.

archives.[35] In *Mal d'archive*, Steedman goes on, Derrida 'showed us a *place* … a building, with an inside and outside, which is often a house (occasionally a home). He suggested that in an archive we are under some kind of house arrest.'[36] We are, then, like Malvolio, when we visit an archive: under house arrest. And what leads us to the archive in the first instance is our desire to interpret the past and even to have some kind of 'authentic' experience of this past. We are seduced by the archive, and delude ourselves, much like Malvolio deludes himself into believing Olivia is in love with him because of Maria's forged letter, into thinking we can reach the truth and experience the past directly. As Derrida explains, 'It is thus, in this domiciliation, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently marks this institutional passage from the private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret.'[37] It is significant to note here that Derrida says 'that archives take place'. This performative quality to the archive is important because it suggests that archives are not static entities. 'Taking place' (like a play) implies an event. And the event in question is interpretation. It is the act of interpretation that 'takes place' in the archive and that 'marks this institutional passage from the private to the public': the event *makes sense* of the archives so that it becomes available to the public in the form of knowledge. It allows what was once hidden to be revealed.

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[35] Steedman notes that these symptoms include lack of sleep, anxiety, actual fever, and more anxiety induced by the financial cost of traveling to the archive in the first place, see. See, *Dust*, pp. 17-18.
[36] Steedman, *Dust*, p. 11.
[37] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 2.

In *The Allure of the Archives* (the title of the book itself suggests desire, temptation, fantasy), Arlette Farge describes this interpretative process and the problems it raises:

> No matter how much the real seems to be there, visible and tangible, it reveals nothing more than its physical presence, and it is naïve to believe that this is its essence. The physical pleasure of finding a trace of the past is succeeded by doubt mixed with the powerless feeling of not knowing what to do with it. […] Its importance lies in the interpretation of its presence, in the search for its complex meaning, in framing its 'reality' within systems of symbols – systems for which history attempts to be the grammar.[38]

History as grammar: history as the rules that govern language. As Michel Foucault has so famously observed, 'The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events.'[39] It is through language that we *make sense* and *make* history. But that is all it ever can be – a sense – not *the truth* or even *a truth* but a subjective impression at a particular cultural and historical moment. Farge goes on to comment that it is only by working in the archive that 'you realize that it is an illusion to imagine that one could ever actually reconstruct the past.'[40] I would add that it is only through the process of constructing and

[38] Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 11-12.
[39] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 145.
[40] Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, p. 14.

making publicly available a *digital* archive do we reveal this illusion. As Walter Benjamin has argued, 'History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now.'[41]

Maybe, then, the allure of the archive is just that: by reading the documents of the past, we make sense of the present. By going to a dark room and writing stories, we try and cure ourselves of the madness that inflicts us as subjects in a world that is often incomprehensible. Like Viola says in *Twelfth Night*: 'O time thou must untangle this not I. / It is too hard a knot for me t'untie.' (2.2 II. 40-41). And what better place to try and untangle time than in an archive? In *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*, Antoinette Burton edits and brings together a collection of essays that documents encounters with archives. In her introduction, Burton recounts the numerous occasions when on telling colleagues about the nature of her book, she has been regaled by the 'boot camp narrative' of the 'drama of getting to archives, living in terrible digs while working there, and enduring dilapidated working conditions and capricious archivists'.[42] She goes on to say that the archive 'imposes its own meanings on the evidence contained therein, and watches over users both literally and figuratively' and that the archive is also a 'panopticon whose claim to total knowledge is matched by its capacity for total surveillance.'[43] Historically, then, archives are sites that are unwelcoming, often inaccessible, and not particularly 'user-friendly'; again, like Malvolio, they are often kept under lock and key in a darkened room, closely guarded

[41] Benjamin, 'Thesis on the Philosophy of History', p. 261.
[42] Antoinette Burton, *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 8.
[43] Burton, Archive Stories, p. 9.

by ill-natured gatekeepers of our cultural record. This historical construction of the archive, I suggest, has unfortunately been remediated into the digital era and the many scholarly digital archives that have appeared online in the past decade. They are often difficult to use with no consideration for the user, lacking in the intuitive design that would help a user easily find what they want; even when they are first launched, the websites and technology that they use are so out of date that they exist in what is effectively the digital equivalent of the dilapidated conditions that Burton's colleagues experience when doing archival research.

Through the design choices and decisions that I took at the start of the project, *The Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* has tried to suggest that a digital archive can be just as valuable to the general public as it can to scholars. It has tried to demolish (or at least reduce) those structures that exist between academic research and popular interest. The digital archive also expands our notion of interpretation, however. No longer are we under a 'house arrest' when we 'use' an archive. In fact, we could be anywhere in the world. Portable devices like mobile phones, laptops and tablets provide us with the means necessary to carry out the work of interpretation wherever we go. As Benjamin suggested, the mass-circulation of images brought about through mechanical reproduction would have a huge social impact on the democratisation of culture, negating the need for cultural gatekeepers and authorities.[44]

[44] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', pp. 211-235.

Removed from its physical and institutional moorings, the archive has become democratised and open to anybody with access to the world wide web. Interestingly, however, and perhaps ironically given what Benjamin asserts about the loss of aura in mechanical reproduction, Burton warns that with this democratisation there has been a resurgence in the notion that the archive has a 'new kind of sacral quality'. She adds, 'This sacralisation occurs as more and more people seek and help to create access to a more democratic vision of the archive: that is, as different kinds of archival subjects and archive users proliferate, with their own archive stories to tell.[45] Significantly, the debates surrounding the 'authenticity' or 'sanctity' of an archive, digital or otherwise, are the same as those that have been played out in Shakespeare studies. David Kastan's *Shakespeare and the Book* (again the title is revealing: it implicitly invokes sacredness – '*the* Book'? we might justly ask, as in The Bible? This sense is magnified in fact that the front cover is of a portrait of Shakespeare in a stained glass window) is about how Shakespeare has been transformed from a working playwright into a literary author through the material forms of his work.[46] One of the most fascinating chapters is when Kastan describes how in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the plays were adapted for the stage in versions that were 'aggressively modified to satisfy the expectations of fashionable audiences' while at the same time there was a growing consensus among editors and

[45] Burton, *Archive Stories,* p. 5.
[46] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

scholars of the need to restore the plays to how Shakespeare originally intended them to be.[47]

This tension between the popular stage and the textual scholarship of Shakespeare's various editors ultimately resulted in a Shakespeare who was to be *seen* (the plays only coming alive in performance) and a Shakespeare who was to be *read* (the plays only revealing their true meaning in the study). Ironically, however, faced with a vast amount of different editions, each with different editing apparatuses, the project of restoring and creating a 'true' and 'authentic' Shakespeare actually had the opposite result. As Kastan writes, 'a century of critical attention had succeeded in making the instabilities and imperfections of the text matters of common knowledge.'[48] Michael Dobson, however, alerts us to the fact that no matter how paradoxical it may seem to want to 'enshrine Shakespeare's texts as national treasures with the desire to alter their content', these two processes 'were often mutually reinforcing ones … the claiming of Shakespeare as an Enlightenment culture hero … demanded the substantial rewriting of his plays.'[49] Dobson limits himself here to the Enlightenment, the period when Shakespeare became 'Shakespeare' – the National Poet. But what Dobson would undoubtedly also understand is that we are 'rewriting' Shakespeare's plays all the time. What keeps Shakespeare relevant and able to maintain his position as National Poet is that, whenever a new technology comes along, we appropriate and re-write (or remediate) his body of work to fit that new form. We can see this pattern

[47] Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, p. 84.
[48] Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, p. 107.
[49] Michael Dobson, *The Making of a National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship 1660–1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 5.

recurring again and again, whether it is wood engraving, photography, cinema, or, indeed, a digital archive; we are constantly reinforcing and validating Shakespeare's position as the central focus of our national culture by incorporating his works into new media and technologies. It is a process in which *The Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* inevitably participates.

An open access digital archive also allows a user to become part of this process and, hopefully, results in a productive and valuable tension, or even a collaboration, between what a member of the public wants from the archive and the needs of the scholarly community. Because of this close interaction between these two different communities, the digital archive offers one of the only alternative spaces, outside of the theatre, where Shakespeare scholars and members of the public can interact and be in close intellectual proximity to each other. *The Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* allows users to discuss and comment upon every image it holds and it also allows these illustrations to be shared on Facebook and Twitter. By being able to track, interrogate and analyse what illustrations people are looking at, sharing and commenting upon, we may be able better to understand how we 'construct' Shakespeare in the twenty-first century. The democratisation of the archive also means a democratisation of Shakespeare. It challenges a user to understand, appreciate and recognise that there is no such thing as an authentic Shakespeare text or performance. Kastan argues that:

> None of the forms in which we can read Shakespeare is authentic. Nor can this be taken as a grudging admission that

> only in the theatre is that authenticity found, for the theatre from the first has always been willing to sacrifice presence to performance considerations, the author's text merely a script to be played and played with, an occasion to engage and display the talents of other theatrical artists all of whom impose their desires upon the text.[50]

There is not one space, textual or physical, where we can ever experience the authentic Shakespeare. All we can ever do is play with the plays and project our own desires onto them.

Desire. It is a word that has cropped up many times in this discussion. All texts elicit desire but especially Shakespeare's and this is intimately related to the archive and to our craving to *make* history and tell stories. As Derrida has argued one aspect of Archive Fever may be the desire for origins and beginnings, but another aspect, I suggest, is the desire to create narratives that make sense of our place in the world. This desire for the archive and our repetitious return to it, despite knowing we can never reconstruct the past, can be explained in Lacanian terms by our unconscious desire for completeness. Catherine Belsey explains that the objects of desire are 'no more than a succession of substitutes for an imagined originary presence, a half-remembered "oceanic" pleasure in the lost real, a completeness which is desire's final, unobtainable object.'[51] Belsey is talking here about desire between human beings, but does not the same idea apply

[50] Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, p. 136.
[51] Catherine Belsey, *Desire: Love Stories in Western Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 5.

both to Shakespeare and the archive itself? We long to 'complete' Shakespeare, to finally discover the 'originary' material that he wrote in his own hand because, it is as if by doing so, that we as a culture can somehow become psychologically whole. This is, as Belsey acknowledges, unobtainable, but we still repeatedly strive nevertheless; we go back to the plays time and time again looking for new meanings that could somehow satisfy our insatiable desire to understand what the plays are about. Shakespeare is the paradigmatic example of desire and how it is never fulfilled.

The same is true of the archive itself and this accounts for Farge's anxiety and feeling of powerlessness when she discovers a trace of the past. This trace, we always feel, may be the document that completes our research, that gives us an 'authentic' experience of the past. It is this fetishistic object, this discovery, this originary document, that validates our work as scholars and also eliminates the anxiety about 'what to do with it', because when we have discovered a trace of the past our responsibility is to *make sense* of it. But that is all it ever is: a *trace* and these traces do not speak for themselves. Our unconscious desire, however, demands that we return to the archive so that we can metaphorically swim amongst the documents the archive holds in an attempt to reach this 'half-remembered "oceanic" pleasure in the lost real' that Belesy describes. If Shakespeare is the author who best represents how desire is always unfulfilled, the actual physical site of this un-fulfilment is the archive itself.

Like so many other instances in which the digital archive magnifies and exaggerates characteristics of a 'physical' archive, it also amplifies this sense of incompleteness. This manifests itself in two ways. First, as a creator of the archive, what Derrida would call the arkhon, I am constantly plagued by doubts that I have missed something out, an important illustration that I have somehow neglected that could shed light on not just Victorian illustrated Shakespeare, or even Victorian visual culture, but all of *culture itself*. Of course, the archive can never be complete but it does not stop the desire to make it so. As *VISA* has developed from what was originally going to be a few hundred illustrations into a few thousand, the desire for comprehensiveness has grown, to the point where I am considering a potential post-doctoral project that incorporates all the illustrations from all major Shakespeare editions from 1709 to the early part of the twentieth century. The second way this sense of incompleteness is experienced is when I have tagged the images to make them searchable. There is always a sense that there is something *lacking* and incomplete about this tagging process, as if the visual always exceeds the verbal. As Feste announces in *Twelfth Night*, 'words are grown so false I am loathe to do reason with them.' (3.1 l. 23).

The creation of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* has consumed me in a way akin to being in love (or perhaps, madness). I have had many a sleepless night not just thinking about the project, but also actively working on it, often getting to bed as day breaks and spending the following day unable to function, where all I could think about was digitising

ever more images and uploading them, and the various implications of what I was doing. I would often even leave an evening with my friends early because I *had* to work on the archive. *This* was archive fever and I was living in a sort of digital Illyria: a topsy turvy land of festivity, differing perspective (intellectually and personally), and where the past and the present coalesced through the 'whirligig of time' (V. I. 364) on a computer monitor. This was *my* archive story.

Unlike the essays in Burton's collection, however, my archive story does not tell of working in an archive but the actual creation of one. Nevertheless, the story that I have tried to tell thus far has concurred with Burton's analysis of what we should do when we write about archives:

> archives do not simply arrive or emerge fully formed; nor are they innocent of struggles for power in either their creation or their interpretive applications. Though their origins are often occluded and the exclusions on which they are premised often dimly understood, all archives come into being in and as history as a result of specific political, cultural and socioeconomic pressures – pressures which leave traces and which render archives themselves artifacts of history.[52]

My archive story has tried to shed light on this process. With *VISA* I not only want to establish an online community of people who are doing work on the

[52] Burton, *Archive Stories*, p. 6.

archive, but I also want to be able to detail *how* they have used it and in what ways we can push forward digital scholarship. I hope by being able to analyse the ways in which the archive has engaged users I will be able to undertake research that can help us to locate new meanings through user interaction.

When Malvolio reads Maria's letter and becomes a fascinating mix of Puritan rationality – 'Nay, but first let me see, let me see, let me see' (2.5. ll. 109-110) – and passion – 'I thank my stars, I am happy' (2.5. l. 164) – he enacts innumerable encounters scholars have had with archives over the years. We go into the archive with the desire of 'let me see', and find something of interest ('thank my stars'). But it is at this point the complications begin: Malvolio is dragged off to a dark room, while we, as scholars, are left wondering what do with what we have found. In both cases, it is the act of interpretation that is problematic. Or, at least, it is our unconscious desire, ever unsatisfied, that is the real problem. The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* brings this question of interpretation to the foreground. The design and function are one and the same in the archive and are inseparable as key components that comment upon and question how we read images and history. Let us now, finally, turn to the archive itself and begin to explore what it does and how it does it. As Feste says at the end of *Twelfth Night*, 'But that's all one, our play is done' (5.1. l. 403): it is time to make sense. Or, *what you will*.

Ways of Meaning

The first recorded performance of *Twelfth Night* was on February 2nd 1602 and by one of those remarkable coincidences that history often throws up, exactly three hundred and seventy years later, on the same date in 1972, Tom Stoppard's *Jumpers* premiered at the Old Vic theatre in London.[53] *Jumpers* is a meditation on the ridiculousness of academic philosophy including approaches such as deconstruction and poststructuralism that have underpinned my work on the *Victorian Illustration Shakespeare Archive*. *Jumpers* and *Twelfth Night* are, in many respects, very similar: they are both farces set in a disordered world filled with puns, wordplay and eccentric characters. They are also both immensely playful plays and imbued with a certain degree of melancholy. Where the plays differ, however, is in their underlying themes. Where *Twelfth Night* would seem to promote a world that recognises the plurality and fluidity of concepts such as gender, identity and, even textuality, *Jumpers*, whilst also being concerned with such issues, critiques them by attacking the key notion of deconstruction: because there is no inherent 'truth', no centre, no moral certainty, Stoppard tells us, this will lead to a world where we are more concerned with analysing texts and meanings than with 'reality'.

Later in 1972, the BBC broadcast and published in association with Penguin the ground-breaking television series and book *Ways of Seeing* by

[53] Tom Stoppard, *Jumpers* (London: Faber & Faber, 2013). All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

John Berger.[54] The show and the book analyse traditional Western art and art criticism by exposing how when we encounter a work of art we see it through a series of learnt cultural assumptions. As Berger writes, these assumptions concern

> Beauty, Truth, Genius, Civilization, Form, Status, Taste, etc. Many of these assumptions no longer accord with the world as it is. (The world-as-it-is is more than pure objective fact, it includes consciousness.) Out of true with the present, these assumptions obscure the past. They mystify rather than clarify. The past is never there waiting to be discovered, to be recognized for exactly what it is. History always constitutes the relation between a present and its past. [55]

Furthermore, Berger also applies ideas taken from Walter Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' as a way of exploring the function of art in a postmodern world. He writes:

> In the age of pictorial reproduction the meaning of paintings is no longer attached to them; their meaning becomes transmittable: that is to say it becomes information of a sort, and, like all information, it is either put to use or ignored; information carries no special authority within itself. When a painting is put to use, its meaning is either modified or totally changed. One should be quite clear about what this involves. It is not a question of reproduction failing to reproduce certain

[54] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 2008).
[55] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p. 11.

> aspects of an image faithfully; it is a question of reproduction making it possible, even inevitable, that an image will be used for many different purposes and that the reproduced image, unlike an original work, can lend itself to them all.[56]

Berger then describes the ways in which reproduction can be put to such 'uses': it can isolate details from an image; when paintings are used for a film, the selection and arrangement of these images has been carefully chosen by the director to fit the argument s/he is creating, thus lending 'authority to the film-maker'; and, finally, because reproduction allows for words to be placed around the text, the words create an entirely new context in which the image appears and can be understood: 'the image illustrates the sentence'.[57] Berger cleverly uses the medium of the book to demonstrate this last point. Appearing at the bottom of the right page is a picture of a 'cornfield with birds flying out of it'.[58] Berger urges us to contemplate it for a moment and then to turn the page. On the next page Berger informs us that this was the last picture Van Gogh painted before he killed himself. The image itself has not changed but the context we now understand it in has. We search the image for clues that might reveal Van Gogh's frame of mind as he painted it, as if, reductively, art is always linked biographically to the situation that the artist finds him or herself in. Shakespeare, as the anti-Stratfordian argument goes, could not have written *Romeo and Juliet* because he had never travelled to

[56] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p. 24.
[57] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p. 10.
[58] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p. 27.

Italy; therefore, the plays must have been written by Francis Bacon or another well-travelled candidate.

Ways of Seeing is one of those books that has had such an influence on the way we think about and understand art that it should by now, over forty years since it was first broadcast and published, feel clichéd and full of familiar tropes and ideas that have been superseded in the intervening years by other concepts and, perhaps, *new* ways of seeing. However, the book seems more pertinent now than ever before. The proliferation and the heightened awareness we have of images is, I would argue, a hallmark of not just the postmodern but also the digital.

As I sit here, typing this, distracted by my phone informing me that I have been 'tagged' in a photograph on Instagram and that a friend 'likes' a photograph I posted on Facebook, my attention has suddenly become drawn to a book on my desk. Appropriately enough the book is called *The Condition of Postmodernity*, by David Harvey.[59] What has caught my attention is the image on the front cover. I turn to the back of the book and read that the picture is called *Dream of Liberty* by Madelon Vriesendorp and is from 1974, two years after the publication and broadcast of *Ways of Seeing* and two years after the premiere of *Jumpers*. The image depicts the Statue of Liberty which` appears to have come to life and is breaking out of the Empire State Building. The top third of the building has collapsed and has fallen to the ground, whilst in the distance the top of two other skyscrapers are breaking through the surface of what is presumably the United States. The Statue of

[59] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

Liberty is facing West, towards the rest of America. Meanwhile, to the right of the picture, three Egyptian Pyramids and the Sphinx look as if they are floating like an Armada, and about to invade the American mainland. In the sky, above this scene, a cosmic storm is raging and the moon is just coming into view above the earth.

Reading this image from my own cultural moment in 2016, I am startled by how it relates to the current situation in the world today. The fallen tower of the Empire State Building obviously brings to mind the 9/11 attacks in 2001, whilst the 'invading' fleet of pyramids and the sphinx, themselves very obvious signifiers of Arabia, Islam and the Eastern 'Other', elicit a sense of paranoia. The picture seems to be saying that America, despite its best efforts (the Statue of Liberty facing to the West), must come to terms with ideas of moral and cultural relativism if it is going to understand its place in the world in the Twenty-First Century. It has been argued that it was because the United States in 2003 (along with its Allies, the so-called 'coalition of the willing') failed to understand that Western values are not universal, that one man's moral certainty that he is doing the right thing is, in another culture, the very definition of evil, that led to the blood bath in Iraq, the repercussions of which we are seeing played out on a daily basis with the horror that is being inflicted by 'ISIS' in the Middle East and elsewhere. We live in a relational world where our values and ideologies are constructed in the culture that we are embedded in. Moral and cultural relativity in and of themselves are not the problem, then. The problem is when one culture wants to impose their values, their ideologies, their *ways of seeing* the world onto another.

In the West, for example, the way we see the world has been defined by the invention of perspective in Renaissance painting. The idea that lines converge, that things further away are smaller, that there is such a thing as a 'vanishing point' seems to us to be so 'natural' and 'obvious' that we find it difficult to comprehend not just other ways of representing the world, but also of understanding it. As Richard L. Gregory demonstrates, perspective is a cultural construct and not 'natural' at all: other cultures do not see perspective in the same way. He writes: 'People living in the Western world have a visual environment rich in perspective cues to distance.'[60] Moreover, 'in connection with non-Western people, it is perhaps worth adding that they make little or nothing of drawings or photographs of familiar objects […] perspective cues are made use of only after considerable experience'.[61] Perspective, then, and our *way of seeing* is learnt and determined by our culture. This, of course, has implications for our understanding and comprehension of the wider world, and also, significantly, for the ways in which we can begin to start theorising how, when we look at our computer screens, what we see is not just the 'way computers work' or the 'way the world wide web' is, but is the result of complex cultural forces extending as far back as four hundred years.

Anne Friedberg actually suggests that perspective 'may have reached its end on the computer desktop.'[62] Friedberg argues that because 'a text or image in one window meets other texts or images in other "windows" on the same screen' then 'each element in composition is seen separately with no

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[60] Richard L. Gregory, 'Perspective', in *Reading Images*, ed. Julia Thomas (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 11-16 (p. 11).
[61] Gregory, 'Perspective', p. 13.
[62] Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006), p. 2.

systematic spatial relationship between them.'[63] She goes on to observe that the computer desktop has more in common with cubism – 'frontality, suppression of depth, overlapping layers' – than with Renaissance perspective. It is a compelling and, indeed, attractive argument: after all a computer does deal with fragments of texts and images especially well and successfully. A computer's ability to 'cut and paste' is, arguably, its and postmodernity's defining feature.

I would like to suggest, however, that what makes the computer so successful (and at the same time so problematic) is its incredible ability to simulate anything in the world: whether that be our experience of cubism or perspective. This is problematic because versatility gives the impression of transparency: that what we are seeing on the computer screen is the *real* object and/or historical artefact itself. No matter how formally different they may appear, a painting by Picasso or a painting by Leonardo da Vinci as seen on a computer screen is still experienced by us as an image on a two dimensional surface. Just as we have, over a period of centuries, naturalised perspective, we have already began to 'naturalise' the world wide web and the way it presents digital objects to us as apparently unmediated. This is why I believe so strongly that courses that deal with digital literacy should not just 'teach' students how to use the web for research and simple search and retrieval, but should actually make them *critically aware* of the processes and structures that the images or texts went through to become digital objects on the web page in the first place. How, for example, does an image of

[63] Friedberg, *The Virtual Window*, p. 2.

Shakespeare's first folio signify differently on a site such as the British Library's, than it would on Ebay?

One of the epigrams to this chapter was by Donald Crimp, who makes the comment that 'The desire of representation exists only insofar as it never be fulfilled, insofar as the original always be deferred. It is only in the absence of the original that representation may take place.'[64] In short, the condition of representation can only be reached through the absence of the original. Again, we see that desire can never be fulfilled, that through representation we long to come into contact with, experience and encounter, the original, but it is never met. A representation is, by definition, never the original, and because of the sheer amount of representations contained within them, digital archives could be seen as cathedrals of desire. Whereas in a physical archive our desire is to have a direct experience with the past, our desire in a digital archive is for a direct experience with the artefact the digital object represents. It is the ease with which the computer makes these objects of desire appear to us and the way that the computer allows us to manipulate these objects of desire that creates the illusion that we might be finally able to encounter a moment of history embedded within the object. Of course, our desire is never fulfilled: there is always going to be one more image or one more document to stimulate our interests. The digital archive makes these objects of desire so easily accessible from any computer. And we constantly repeat this process. The Cathedral of Desire, with its infinity of windows onto the world, and with its provision of the ultimate dream of liberty, seduces us into thinking that we

[64] Donald Crimp, 'The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism', p.98.

can escape our own cultural and historical moment. It is, of course, only a dream, but the seduction is so strong we do not wish to wake up.

Shakespeare, as ever, seems to understand this and in Sonnet 123, warns us to be wary of History as he confronts Time itself:

> No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change.
> Thy pyramids built up with newer might
> To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
> They are but dressings of a former sight.
> Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
> What thou dost foist upon us that is old;
> And rather make them born to our desire
> Than think that we before have heard them told.
> Thy registers and thee I both defy,
> Not wondering at the present nor the past,
> For thy records and what we see doth lie,
> Made more or less by thy continual haste.
> This I do vow and this shall ever be;
> I will be true despite thy scythe and thee.[65]

'Thy registers and thee I both defy / Not wondering at the present nor the past, / For thy records and what we see doth lie'. This is Shakespeare in poststructuralist mode and it is at moments like this one can sympathise with

[65] William Shakespeare, 'Sonnet 23', in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (London: Arden, 1997), p. 357.

Terry Eagleton when he writes that 'Though conclusive evidence is hard to come by, it is difficult to read Shakespeare without feeling that he was almost certainly familiar with the writings of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein and Derrida.'[66] The sonnet is about the speaker confronting representations and finding them lacking. Could we not imagine, perhaps whimsically and self-indulgently, that when Shakespeare writes 'Thy pyramids built up with newer might / To me are nothing novel, nothing strange; / They are but dressings of a former sight' that he could be referring to digital archives? 'Dressings of a former sight'? Is that not what a digital archive actually is? And are not digital archives like 'pyramids' in the sense that they store our dead, the data preserved like modern day Egyptian Pharaohs: mummified, 'photoshopped' and remediated as jpegs and stored on an underground server somewhere where the temperature is maintained at an ideal level so as not to cause damage? I am also reminded here, once again, of Shelley's sonnet *Ozymandias*, where in the desert sands all that remains is a 'shattered visage' (l. 4) of that eponymous 'king of kings' (l. 10) who urges any traveller to 'look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!' (l. 11) Of course, 'boundless and bare / the lone and level sands stretch far away': there is nothing left. Time has destroyed even the mightiest of works. Does the same fate await digital archives? Will they, in the future, be excavated, slowly making themselves visible beneath the earth to future archaeologists like the tops of the skyscrapers in the *Dream of Liberty*? As Time says in *The Winter's Tale*: 'I witness […] / th' freshest things now reigning, and make stale / The

[66] Terry Eagleton, 'Preface', in *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1986), pp. ix-x.

glistering of this present'.[67]

In Stoppard's *Jumpers* the interrogation into whether or not there are universal moral values that exist and transcend time and space, culture and history, is given its most explicit voice when two astronauts learn that they have only got enough oxygen for only one of them to survive the trip back to earth. Deciding that Earth laws have no jurisdiction on the Moon, one of the astronauts kills the other. This leads Dotty, the wife of George, the Philosophy lecturer, who spends the whole play trying to write a lecture on whether or not there is a God, to announce:

> Man is on the moon, his footprint on solid ground, and he has seen us whole, all in one go, little, local — and all our absolutes, the thou-shalts and the thou-shalt-nots that seemed to be the very condition of our existence, how did they look to two moonmen with a single neck to save between them? Like the local customs of another place. […] Because the truths that have been taken on trust, they've never had edges before, there was no vantage point to stand on and see where they stopped. (54)

Poststructuralism gives us these edges and vantage points without us having to go to the moon. It allows us to question these truths we have taken on trust and considered 'common sense' and it is at its most valuable and rewarding as a critical tool when it is daring to do so.

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[67] William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works,* pp. 1103-1130 (4.1. ll. 11-14).

On April 16th 1972, just over two months after the premiere of *Jumpers*, and three hundred and seventy years and two months after the first performance of *Twelfth Night*, Apollo 16, the penultimate manned mission to land on the moon, took off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. Its destination on the lunar surface was the Descartes Highlands.[68] René Descartes the philosopher most famous for the statement 'I think, therefore I am', is often considered one of the fathers of Enlightenment thought. This mind-body dualism is still one of the fundamental building blocks on which we, who live in the West, understand ourselves and our relationship to the world: we conceive of ourselves as free thinking individuals. As Catherine Belsey notes of Descartes, 'his famous phrase has become part of current Western "common sense". […] Its effect is to conflate the self with what thinks. 'I' becomes primarily a consciousness, and that consciousness, in turn, is seen as the origin of "my" ideas and values.'[69] Poststructuralism suggests, however, that thought itself is not the origin of my ideas and values but it is instead determined and constructed by language and culture. It is this profound shift in how we understand ourselves – as subjects in a world of signification as opposed to autonomous individuals whose consciousness is the origin of our thoughts – that has meant poststructuralism has remained a controversial yet rewarding tool to investigate culture.

What poststructuralism (alongside psychoanalysis) has done for the once sacred authority of the cogito, mechanical reproduction has done for the

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[68]See, Nasa Mission Pages, <http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/apollo/missions/apollo16.html#.VZKB0GBvbww> [accessed on 17 June 2015].

[69] Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 65.

authority and sanctity of images. John Berger explains:

> If the new language of images were used differently, it would, through its use, confer a new kind of power. Within it we could begin to define our experiences more precisely in areas where words are inadequate. (Seeing comes before words.) Not only personal experience, but also the *essential* historical experience of our relation to the past: that is to say the experience of seeking to give meaning to our lives, of trying to understand the history of which we can become the active *agents.* The art of the past no longer exists as it once did. Its authority is lost. In its place is a language of images. [70]

This new language of images, which Berger urges us to use *differently*, is, I suggest, fulfilled in the concept of remediation, image manipulation software such as Photoshop and open-source and open-access content management platforms like WordPress, which enable us to create our own digital archives and to share them with the world. What is so interesting from the perspective of Illustration Studies and my own project is that illustration itself was always considered to be 'ephemeral, ubiquitous, insubstantial, available, valueless'; it never attained the privileged and authoritative place in culture that painting, for example, did.[71] And this is why it is so exciting to be able to share the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*: it allows these illustrations that were once immensely popular with the Victorian public to be seen and appreciated once again.

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[70] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* p. 33.
[71] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, p. 32.

In *Shakespeare for the People: Working Class Readers, 1800–1900*, Andrew Murphy quotes from *The Publishers Circular* from 1863 about the aims of the publishers in producing the *Cassell's Illustrated Shakespeare*, the edition that is available in my archive. The publishers write that 'by its cheapness … it would be within the reach of the poorest scholar.' They desired for 'Shakespeare's plays a place in every household of the land, from the highest to the lowest' and to produce 'a profusely-illustrated Edition of Shakespeare worthy of a place in the palaces of the great, and which will, nevertheless, from its cheapness, find its way into the lowliest cottage'.[72] It is in this spirit, I hope, and rather arrogantly suggest, that the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* will find its audience: not just amongst the palaces of academia but also amongst the wider public, from the poorest schools to the 'lowliest cottages'. The digital archive provides us with *new ways of seeing* because it can reach such a vast and diverse audience and it may be possible in the future to be able to analyse, through asking users for certain information, how, for example, a young Asian student would read an image of Cleopatra differently from, say, a white male Professor. Or, how would school children engage differently with the illustrations of *Romeo and Juliet* from a theatre company about to stage the play? The potential and possibilities of the digital archive are unprecedented in what it allows us to understand about how people see images of Shakespeare.

It is these different ways of seeing the world, then, which poststructuralism promotes and celebrates. Meaning is never fixed, never

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[72] Andrew Murphy, *Shakespeare for the People: Working Class Readers, 1800–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 80.

singular, but open to many different interpretations. The digital in conjunction with poststructuralism provides us with a powerful and potent tool to better understand how we make meaning. As George P. Landow astutely observes in *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*: 'What is perhaps most interesting about hypertext […] is not that it may fulfill certain claims of structuralist and poststructuralist criticism but that it provides a rich means of testing them.'[73]

In *Of Grammatology* Derrida mentions for the first time what has become one of the key terms in poststructuralism: 'differance' (with an a). Derrida contends that differance:

> does not depend on any sensible plenitude, audible or visible, phonic or graphic. It is, on the contrary, the condition of such a plenitude. Although it *does not exist*, although it is never a *being-present* outside of all plenitude, its possibility is by rights anterior to all that one calls sign (signified/signifier, content/expression, etc.), concept or operation, motor or sensory. This differance is therefore not more sensible than intelligible and it permits the articulation of signs among themselves within the same abstract order – a phonic or graphic text for example – or between two orders of expression'[74]

As ever, with Derrida, this is a hugely complex passage that needs clarification. Thankfully, Catherine Belsey explains it in this way:

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[73] George P. Landow, *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 56.
[74] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 62-63.

> If we go back to the traditional account of meaning, by which the sign stands in for an idea or a thing, we see that the sign takes the place of this idea or thing, re-presents it, makes it present to imagination in its absence. The sign, in the classical account, suspends the presence of the idea or thing, replaces it, and in the process pushes it away. The sign represents a detour which defers presence.[75]

This act of deferral is also how the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* makes meaning and it is for this reason that I like to think of the grid system, the most useful aspect of the archive for research, as the *Differance Engine*. This is because the illustrations contained within the archive only *make sense* in relation to other images within it (and, of course, because it also recalls Charles Babbage's 'Difference Engine' from the 1820s).[76] An illustration of Caliban, for example, might be interesting on its own, but when viewed alongside and in relationship to *all the other* Caliban illustrations within the archive, each image's meaning is deferred (never fully present) while at the same time each illustration of Caliban contains a trace of all the others. *VISA*, then, in its very functionality enacts *differance* and, perhaps, it suggests that *all research* is based around this signifying system. What *VISA* does with images is just a visual account of what we have been doing with words for centuries: *making sense of the world through a complex web of signification*.

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[75] Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 2nd edn (London and New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 117.
[76] See, Doron Swade, *The Difference Engine: Charles Babbage and the Quest to Build the First Computer* (London: Penguin, 2002).

The digital archive, by its very nature reminds us of the absent physical artifact: the illustrated Victorian Shakespeare editions. It contains, and always will, a trace of the other, just as the illustrated editions will always contain a trace, by their absence, of the stage and live Shakespearean drama. It is in this way that digital archives will forever be haunted by their past, like Hamlet and Hamlet's ghost, the physical and the spectral. 'There is nothing outside the text', Derrida, famously asserted.[77] In the twenty-first century, there is, perhaps, nothing outside the Archive.

[77] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158.

3

ArttoEnchant

What seest though else / In the dark backward and abysme of time?

Prospero, *The Tempest* (1.2. ll. 49-50)

Thought is free.

Stephano, *The Tempest* (3.2.ll. 125)

Start Looking

If you type into your web browser www.shakespeareillustration.org and wait a few milliseconds, thanks to the magic of modern technology and the millions of miles of fibre optic cables that make the Internet and the world wide web possible, you will be able to experience for yourself the *Victorian Illustrated*

Shakespeare Archive and everything that this thesis has discussed and explored. The Archive, which for so long has only existed in abstract form in my head, is actually *there in the world*. Not only that: it also *works*. Over three thousand illustrations taken from the four major Victorian editions of Shakespeare's Complete Works, all digitised by hand, all 'cleaned' up using image manipulation software, all tagged according to the content of the image and provided with accompanying bibliographical metadata and all categorised according to many diverse attributes, are available *right now* for *anyone in the world* to use however they like.

I wrote that last paragraph sat in a coffee shop in central Cardiff. As I was writing I kept switching between this Word document and my web browser where I would, like an over-excited child, play with the Archive and ask of it new questions, questions that could form the basis of articles, an edited collection, or even an extended monograph that would use the archive as the basis (the central text) of an account of Victorian Shakespeare illustration. The problem with having so much potential research material at one's fingertips is that, to keep to the child analogy, one inevitably feels like a kid in a sweetshop: there is just so much potential there that we are overwhelmed by the responsibility to choose the right sweets or, in this case, to ask the right research questions.

In a return to Archive Fever, we become possessed by the Archive and, in return, we want to possess *it*. Before we can begin to make sense of the archive and discover whatever secrets are hidden within it, we feel as if we need to account for everything in the archive by asking of it as many

diverse questions as possible. Marjorie Garber has written that she gets a 'boing boing' feeling when she experiences the 'passionate encounter between artwork and text'.[1] I suggest that we also experience this 'boing boing' feeling when confronted with resources that makes us aware of their research potential. Unable to assimilate or understand the resource as a whole, our minds bounce from one research question to another ('boing boinging') in the hope that in the process we will not only better understand how that resource works (and when I say 'works' I do not just mean digital resources; all 'physical' archives, for example, 'work' in different ways), but that we may also discover in that resource an image, text or artefact that can be used to explain that resource. With the digital, of course, the 'boing boing' effect is even more pronounced because we have access so readily to these resources.

Whereas in the past if I asked myself if any of the Shakespeare illustrations by John Gilbert (one of the illustrators who is central to my archive) were influenced by the work of the Pre-Raphaelites (a perfectly feasible question as they were both working at a similar time in the 1860s), the question would see me having to find a research library with the three volumes of the Howard Staunton edition which contains Gilbert's illustrations and then travelling there. Today I can simply call up my archive from the coffee shop where I am sat and begin my research. Furthermore, I can keep asking new research questions: if Gilbert *was* influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, which plays and/or characters is this influence most evident in

[1] Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), p. 240.

and to what significance? Can it tell us anything about how Gilbert envisioned the Pre-Raphaelite movement? Can it tell us anything about how Gilbert envisioned Shakespeare's plays? Moreover, if I get bored of asking these questions I could ask of the Archive – just as easily – something completely different, such as how do the different illustrators portray the character of Ariel? The digital exaggerates the 'boing boing' effect by making these new digital scholarly resources available and accessible to anyone at any time of day. If I were, hypothetically, going to write a monograph on Victorian Shakespeare Illustration, I could, thanks to my archive, write the whole book from this very coffee shop and not set foot once in a rare books library.

That final sentence is rather astonishing. If I could better control the 'boing boing' nature of my brain, if I could stop asking myself sentences that begin with 'I wonder if…', and focus on a single theme or idea then I could, beginning right now, in this quiet coffee shop (it's getting late and there are only a few other people in here), use the archive to start work a new research project One of the most important aspects of a digital archive, if it is created with sufficient thoughtfulness, care and imagination is that it enables new research questions to be asked. Whether we are working in the humanities or the sciences, every project, article, book or experiment begins with a research question and as such any resource that can help us to ask new ones should be highly prized. 'Why did that apple fall on my head?', Isaac Newton asked before 'discovering' the 'laws' of the universe. 'Why did Kenny Meadows depict King Lear in this way when H.C. Selous depicted him in another?', I

ask, highly aware of the discrepancy between Newton's question and his ultimate discovery and my own: everything is relative after all.

I used to have a film tutor whose mantra was 'the art of film is the art of juxtaposition' and this is also true of digital archives, even fundamental to them. As I have tried to demonstrate in this thesis, there is an *art* to the creation of a digital archive and that art, I have learnt, resides in allowing the archive to create exciting juxtapositions that can reveal to us new connections and relationships between illustrations, images and texts. And, of course, what these juxtapositions allow are *new research questions* to be asked. As we have seen, I no longer have to go to a research library with a specific question in mind: I can ask these questions from anywhere in the world, as long as I have an Internet connection. As undoubtedly useful as that is (and it *is*; we should never take for granted how miraculous that convenience can be), what makes a digital archive unique – as something only the digital can do – is its unprecedented capacity to bring together historical artefacts into new associations with each other.

What follows, then, is a guide to the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* and how it can be used for research purposes. I will begin by discussing the various features of the Archive, providing an overview of what each feature does and the importance of it, before moving on to a few case studies that will show how the Archive can generate new research questions and how the Archive allows us to analyse the same scene from the same play in a number of compelling ways.

This thesis began with a discussion of how we can begin to think about setting up a digital archive in the first place, the curatorial, digitisation and remediation aspects of such a project, before moving on to discuss the creation of the archive itself and the theoretical implications around this. It is only now, in this final section that I have realised that this thesis has actually told a very personal story with a beginning, middle and end that corresponds chronologically to the creation of the Archive itself. However, as Antonio says in *The Tempest*, 'what's past is prologue' (2.1. l. 258) and here we are now, three years later with a complete, fully functioning Digital Humanities project. The archive itself only existed in hypothetical, abstract and potential form. Now that it is complete this 'potential form' has changed: no longer is it about the creation of the archive itself, but the potential of what we can do with it. This is where the future begins. Boing boing.

When a user first enters the archive s/he will be greeted at the top of the home page by the names of the three illustrators (Kenny Meadows, John Gilbert, H.C. Selous) whose works comprise the archive, along with Charles Knight whose edition uses multiple illustrators. If a user rolls their mouse over one of their names, a drop-down menu flashes up beneath it. This menu contains the following categories: Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, and this is one of a few ways (perhaps the first way) that a user might choose to explore and engage with the archive. If a user rolls their mouse over Comedies, another menu will pop up to its right with a list of all of Shakespeare's Comedies that appeared in that edition of his plays. A user can then select whatever Comedy they wish to investigate and in a single

click, they are at the heart of the Archive itself. Clicking on ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ in the Comedies menu will bring up a new page where all the illustrations of the play from that edition are displayed in thumbnail form and in the order they appear in the edition. A user can then decide whether s/he wants to explore the set of illustrations from the beginning (in order) by clicking on the first illustration that appears in the gallery, or, alternatively, choose any other illustration in the gallery that s/he wants to explore further.

By clicking on one of these thumbnail illustrations, the archive will display this set of illustrations in a carousel view. A user can then scroll through all the images that make up that particular play by that illustrator in a format that is simple and intuitive. Beneath each illustration in the carousel view is the metadata for that particular image, allowing researchers easily to identify information about the illustration. Every image is displayed in the order in which it appears in that edition, meaning that users can not only clearly understand how the archive is structured and organized but can also follow the pictorial narrative of the play. Each illustration is numbered out of the total number of images that make up that particular play, providing researchers with important information so that they can ascertain exactly where an image appears in its broader context. For example, the illustration by John Gilbert, ‘Bottom as an Ass’, is cataloged as number 12/19. It is the twelfth illustration in a series that contains nineteen.

Other information that the metadata provides users with is the name of the illustrator (where available), the name of the the engraver (where available), the size of the illustration in millimetres and inches, the title of the

edition from which the illustration is taken, and the publisher and place of publication of that text. All of this data will enable researchers to investigate and analyse Victorian Shakespeare illustration in a way that is unprecedented.

When a user is exploring the illustrations in the carousel view s/he can also view the image in full size and magnify it. This is where all the time spent digitising the illustrations in high resolution is rewarded: the clarity and the magnification of the images enables the viewer to engage with details of the engraving that would be difficult to appreciate in the printed book. The ability to switch between viewing the illustrations on both a macro level, as part of a wider network of images, and a micro level, as an individual image, demonstrates just how digital technology can facilitate research and learning.

On the homepage is the 'Start Looking…' feature. This area of the Archive is a menu that allows a user to search directly for certain characters, plays, illustrators, or genres (and a few more attributes). In contrast to the way of searching where a user clicks on the play by the illustrator – what we could call the 'Illustrator Pathway', 'Start Looking…' allows a much more advanced way of searching for specific qualities associated with Shakespeare's plays and encompasses *all* the illustrations in the Archive. If, for example, I wanted to do some research into the character of Miranda, from *The Tempest*, I would open the 'Start Looking…' menu and scroll down until I came to the section called 'Characters' 'Female' and I would click on 'Miranda'. This then would bring up every illustration of Miranda in the Archive.

In addition, next to the name 'Miranda' in parenthesis is a number. This number tells us how many illustrations of Miranda there are in the Archive, allowing a user to see at a glance whether or not the Archive contains many illustrations of a certain character or play. This has interesting applications in that it allows us to see what character was the most illustrated in these editions. Are there large numerical discrepancies between genders? What play has the most illustrations? What play has the least? It would be a fascinating experiment into what Franco Moretti has called 'Distant Reading': the quantitative analysis of texts to uncover cultural patterns and structures.[2] Moretti's work, controversial as it has been, could be the key that opens up the Archive to a new way of thinking about Victorian Shakespeare illustration and to a whole new audience.

'Start Looking…' uses groupings that have been extrapolated from keywords that I have inputted into WordPress' 'Categories' feature. Categories allows for 'posts' to be labelled and categorised. WordPress uses two systems to categorise posts: 'categories' and 'tags'. This system of organisation has been very important in how I envisioned the Archive working and, as a consequence, underpins how the Archive functions. It has allowed me to make a distinction between those search terms a user would probably (though not necessarily) be coming to an illustrated Shakespeare Archive for and those other terms (the 'Rare Visions') that might be just as important for research purposes in telling us about Victorian illustration and culture. 'Categories', then, uses broad keywords related to Shakespeare's plays that

[2] Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London and New York: Verso, 2013).

allow a user to search the Archive directly for attributes that we associate with those plays and which we could expect to find in an illustrated Shakespeare Archive, such as the titles of plays and major characters.

By contrast, the 'tags', which form part of the 'Rare Visions' section, are used to describe the illustration in greater detail. For example, John Gilbert's illustration #12 from *Midsummer Night's Dream* (where Snout and Quince discover Bottom has transformed into an ass), can be described under 'Categories' as 'Midsummer Night's Dream', 'John Gilbert' 'Bottom' 'Act III' 'Scene I' and 'Comedy'. However, under 'Tags' the image is described using the following keywords: 'Snout' 'Quince' 'Animals' 'Ass' 'Woods' 'Forests' and 'Magic'. It is worthwhile mentioning here that both 'Categories' and 'Tags' contain attributes that could change or be added to in the future. One of the most exciting aspects of working with the digital is that a project can be modified depending on user's needs or desires. When I have demonstrated the Archive at conferences, I have often been asked why I have not tagged the illustrations thematically to include such attributes as 'love' 'revenge' and 'politics'. One of the reasons I have not included thematic keywords in the Archive is because I want to keep the tags as objective as possible rather than imposing my own subjective interpretation on the illustrations.

Part of what constitutes good design is understanding that what you leave out of a project is just as important as what is left in. Designing an Archive, such as *VISA* always involves balancing accessibility and user-friendliness against all the many potential ways in which the content could be organised. One of the aspects of the Archive I am most proud of is that it is

very easy and intuitive to use, but also the way that the Archive slowly reveals and opens up to a user. My fear in having a list of play links at the top of the homepage, even if it were possible to make it look attractive, would be that users would routinely use those links and would not explore the archive any further. Currently, I feel, the homepage does not give up the Archive's secrets (its content) so obviously and as such, from my witnessing of people testing out the Archive, there is a real thrill when they understand how the Archive works and comprehend how the features fit and work together to create a symbiotic whole.

Good design also means that we can very quickly and effectively modify digital resources. The WordPress system is very efficient in allowing an editor to change or add keyword attributes. I do not envision *VISA* as being a static, monolithic resource: it will change in time depending on the users' needs and my own ability to implement changes that I consider desirable. This fluidity of the Archive and the ease with which changes can be made (and reversed) using the WordPress Editor means that experimentation will always remain at the heart of the project.

When a user clicks on an image in the 'grid view' they are taken directly into what I will call from now on the 'posts page'. The 'posts page' is where every aspect of the Archive comes together: the illustrations, the keywords, the metadata and social media. If I click on the image of Falstaff sitting down, as discussed above, in the 'grid view', I am taken to the 'posts page' which displays at the top of that page the illustration of Falstaff enlarged from the thumbnail image in the 'grid view' (figure 6).

Figure 6 The 'Posts View' in the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*. 'Falstaff', illustration by Kenny Meadows in *The Works of Shakespeare revised from the best authorities with a memoir, and essay on his genius, by Barry Cornwall: and, annotations and introductory remarks on the plays, by distinguished writers: illustrated with engravings on wood, from designs by Kenny Meadows* Vol. I (1843; London: William S. Orr and Co., 1846), p. 95.

To his right, is the title of the illustration, 'Falstaff', in the colour black (so as to differentiate it from the links below). Beneath the illustration title are two separate blocks of text: the first is 'Category' and the second, beneath it, is 'Tag'. To the right of the word 'Category' is a list of all the attributes that this illustration has been designated: 'Act II' 'Comedy' 'Falstaff' 'Kenny Meadows'

and ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor’. Below the list of tags, after a few lines of blank space, are two more links: the first has an arrow pointing to the left and is called ‘Ford’ and the second, underneath ‘Ford’, has an arrow pointing to the right and is called ‘Merry Wives of Windsor Act III Header’. The ‘posts view’, then, allows a user to see a full image of a particular illustration whilst also explicitly revealing the exact keywords that have been attributed to that image.

From a research perspective, what I find so useful about the ‘posts page’, is that, as is the case in a ‘physical’ archive, the user/visitor can often be surprised by what we find, and consequently our research can take us in new and unexpected directions. If I wanted to examine Victorian representations of the character of Falstaff, I would go into the archive, click on ‘Falstaff’ in the ‘Start Looking…’ section, and in the ‘grid view’ begin to explore different depictions of the character. Let us imagine that this image of Falstaff is one of the images I click on: I am now on the ‘posts page’ and while I am looking at the image, my eyes are drawn to the ‘Walking Sticks’ tag. ‘What if’, I ask myself, ‘there is something interesting in investigating how Victorian illustrators used walking sticks to reveal and portray character? What does the pictorial use of a cane signify in the Victorian era? What can it tell us about how the illustrators imagined these characters?’ It is easy to see from this example how this question might develop into a broader topic: what props or objects are associated with what characters and what is their purpose within the illustration? Do they contribute to our understanding of character or the narrative? Is it an illustrator’s responsibility to even elucidate

character in the first place? The Archive has been designed to allow such digressions of thought and to give researchers the freedom and tools to explore those thoughts.

The 'posts page', then, by displaying the keywords that have been assigned to each image makes visible a central (and perhaps paradoxical) aspect of our digital condition: the web might be seen as one of the key vehicles in which the visual both flourishes and contributes to visual culture, but underpinning this carnival of digital imagery is an organisational structure that is textual: the hyperlink. In short, without the textual basis provided by hyperlinks that allow us to tag images we would not be able to find any visual material on the web at all.

By clicking on the tag 'Walking Sticks', the website takes me back to the 'grid view' where every illustration in the Archive that has been marked up with the keyword 'Walking Sticks' is displayed. After a quick browse of all the illustrations that feature in the grid, certain pictorial themes begin to emerge: that the characters who feature the most with walking sticks are, on the whole, overweight men from the genre of Comedy: Dogberry from *Much Ado About Nothing*, Sir Toby from *Twelfth Night* and, Falstaff from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV* being the most abundant examples. This raises the question: were walking sticks used on the Victorian stage for particular comedic purposes? Did Victorian actors and performers use walking sticks as a comedic trope to elicit laughter from the audience? And did the Victorian illustrators of Shakespeare's plays (because they were part of that culture and familiar with the stage use of this prop) include them in their images as it was

the ‘obvious’ thing to do? Moreover, was there a particular Victorian actor associated with these three roles? ‘Walking Sticks’ is a perfect example of how significant the ‘Rare Visions’ section of the Archive can be: by exploring certain visual motifs – those motifs that we could very easily overlook – we have broadened our field of study to encompass Victorian stage and performance history so that we might be able to better understand contemporary Victorian stage practice. If we were to take our exploration of walking sticks further, we could even begin to think about writing a cultural history of the walking stick itself, especially as this object was so fundamental to the success of one of the most famous of all Victorians stage performers and comedians born in the nineteenth century: Charlie Chaplin.

But I am not finished with this trail of thought yet. As I browse through all the images of ‘Walking Sticks’ in the Archive’s ‘grid-view’, I notice another

Figure 7 ‘Falstaff in Windsor’, illustration by John Gilbert in *The Works of Shakespeare. Edited by Howard Staunton; The Illustrations by John Gilbert; Engraved by the Dalziel Brothers* Vol.I (1858-60; London: George Routledge and Sons, 1865-67), p. 641.

image of Falstaff seated with a cane by John Gilbert (figure 7).

Gilbert's illustration is of a scene much earlier in the play, where Falstaff's friends, Bardolph, Nym and Pistol are accused by Slender of picking his pocket. Initially it occurs to me that Falstaff, who is sat regally in the centre of the action, is like a subversive King, perhaps the negative image of Richard II, with a cane instead of a sceptre. Richard II, of course, is the first King to spring to mind because although *The Merry Wives of Windsor* does not form part of the Henriad, *Henry IV Part I* and *Henry IV Part II* are the plays that made the character of Falstaff famous. I wonder whether Gilbert might be making a pictorial reference to one of Shakespeare's most popular characters in this scene. A way to find out is to see how Gilbert has depicted Kings in his illustrations: I click on the 'John Gilbert' link at the top of the page and then click on 'Richard II'.

There, in the header from Act I, sat on his throne, is Richard II, sceptre in hand, while he listens to the dispute between Bolingbroke and Mowbray in a similar way to Falstaff listening to and arbitrating the dispute between Slender and his friends (figure 8).

Figure 8 'Richard II Act I Header', illustration by John Gilbert in *The Works of Shakespeare. Edited by Howard Staunton; The Illustrations by John Gilbert; Engraved by the Dalziel Brothers* Vol. I (1858–60; London: George Routledge and Sons, 1865-67), p. 447.

Furthermore, the mise-en-scene of both illustrations is startlingly similar: Richard II and Falstaff are both seated centrally, while to their left, one of the injured parties is remonstrating with them. In the Falstaff scene Slender is looking at Falstaff's friends and accuses them through exaggerated arm movements, while in the *Richard II* scene Bolingbroke is on his knees pointing at Morbray. There is one further resonance: both scenes are set in Windsor. The opening scene of *Richard II* takes place in Windsor Castle, while the opening of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is set in a street in Windsor outside Page's house. What is so fascinating here is that John Gilbert, in his interpretation of the scene, has Falstaff sat *outside* on a chair. In Shakespeare's text, there is no mention of a chair at all: Falstaff goes outside, from Page's house, presumably when he hears the fuss being made by

Slender, Justice Shallow and Sir Hugh Evans and, as such, does not sit down. Kenny Meadows also depicts this scene, but in Meadows' interpretation, Falstaff, who again has a walking stick, is stood outside the Page's residence with one leg arrogantly hanging over the decorative base of a doorframe (figure 9).

Figure 9 'Falstaff and Friends', illustration by Kenny Meadows in *The Works of Shakespeare revised from the best authorities with a memoir, and essay on his genius, by Barry Cornwall: and, annotations and introductory remarks on the plays, by distinguished writers: illustrated with engravings on wood, from designs by Kenny Meadows* Vol. I (1843; London: William S. Orr and Co., 1846), p. 81.

The composition is also entirely different from Gilbert's. Falstaff is on the far left of illustration while Bardolph, Pistol and Nym (who can just about be seen behind Pistol's left shoulder) are to his right with Pistol being the central character in the illustration. To Pistol's right are Slender (who is evidently

levelling accusations at Pistol), Shallow and Evans. It is a tremendous illustration, but whereas in Gilbert's depiction the composition places Falstaff centrally and constructs him far more as an arbiter type figure with both parties stood either side of him, here, in Meadows' interpretation, Falstaff is much more aligned with his group of acolytes. This is not to say that Meadows' reading is 'wrong' by any means; on the contrary. I am using Meadows' interpretation here as a way to understand what Gilbert's reading of the scene does *differently*.

The seating of Falstaff, then, is Gilbert's own invention. It is a paradigmatic example of the illustrator acting as a *stage director* (or, even, a film director), where he has made certain compositional and artistic decisions in how to stage a scene to enable meanings to be effectively communicated to an audience. If we are familiar with the play, the seating of Falstaff gains additional comedic resonances for the reasons I have outlined above. By choosing to seat Falstaff in this scene the illustrations not only raises the question of what an illustrator's primary role is – fidelity to a text or the elucidation of character, for example – but also the nature of Shakespearean illustration itself. Are these texts *also* performances? In the differences between Gilbert's and Meadows' readings are we essentially witnessing entirely different theatrical productions of the same text? These are the sorts of questions that I hope users of the Archive will begin to explore and investigate. By bringing together these four editions of Victorian Shakespeare illustrations in a way that allows us to compare and contrast the same scene,

the Archive helps us to see how the digital can give us new insights and perspectives on book illustration and, perhaps, even theatrical, history.

The digital also allows us to explore, in an unprecedented way, what Julia Thomas has called interpictorality: how images reference other images.[3] I suggest that Gilbert's illustrations of Falstaff arbitrating the dispute and the Act I header from *Richard II* are an example of this kind of interpictorality. Gilbert cleverly references his own illustration from *Richard II* in his depiction of Falstaff to comment ironically on how the character of Falstaff is, in fact, far from a divine King. This image is visual satire, although to fully understand and appreciate the satire we need to be aware of the *Richard II* illustration. Where Richard II holds a sceptre, Falstaff holds a cane, where Richard II is sat upright on a throne, Falstaff is slouched in a large wooden chair, where the *Richard II* illustration is set in the privacy of Windsor Castle, the Falstaff image is set in the very public space of a Windsor street. The illustrations are mirror images of each other. Moreover, through this interpictorality Gilbert might reveal to us something about Shakespeare himself: in writing the first scene of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was Shakespeare satirising the opening of his own play *Richard II*? It is a deeply compelling question, and one that we have been promted to ask because of the way the Archive has allowed us to investigate the interpictorial relationships between certain illustrations and the meanings they generate. Being able to ask this question in the first instance also suggests that the Archive may give us a better

[3] Julia Thomas, 'Reflections on Illustration: the Database of Mid-Victorian Wood-Engraved Illustration (DMVI)', *Journal of Illustration Studies* (Dec 2007) <http://jois.uia.no/articles.php?article=37> [accessed 6 Jan 2016].

appreciation of how Shakespeare's plays speak to each other and how, like the web itself, Shakespeare's body of work could be considered hypertextual with certain plays, themes, ideas and characters having resonances and connections with each other.

Shakespeare book illustration, of course, does not just exist in a cultural vacuum and the Archive also allows us to recognise how certain illustrations may have influenced painting and how painting, in turn, influenced illustration. The Archive enables us to broaden our view of interpictorality where the same scene from a Shakespeare play is depicted in different media. Shakespeare, perhaps more than any other artist, allows us to examine these scenes across a whole range of visual material from painting, to book illustration, to photography, to film because Shakespeare's works are remediated time and time again.

It is always difficult (and perhaps foolhardy) to chart influences, but as an example of how meanings circulate within a culture and how users might consider approaching the Archive, I would like to think about John Everett Millais' *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* from 1850 and Arthur Hughes' *Ophelia* from 1848. Millais' painting depicts a scene from Act I scene II of *The Tempest* where Ariel sings the famous 'Full Fathom Five' song to Ferdinand as the fairy lures him to meet Miranda. Hughes' *Ophelia*, by contrast, portrays Ophelia from *Hamlet* sitting on the bark of a tree moments before her 'muddy death' (4.7. l. 155).

When I saw Millais' painting recently I was reminded of Kenny Meadows' illustration of the same scene from about eight years previously (figures 10 and 11).

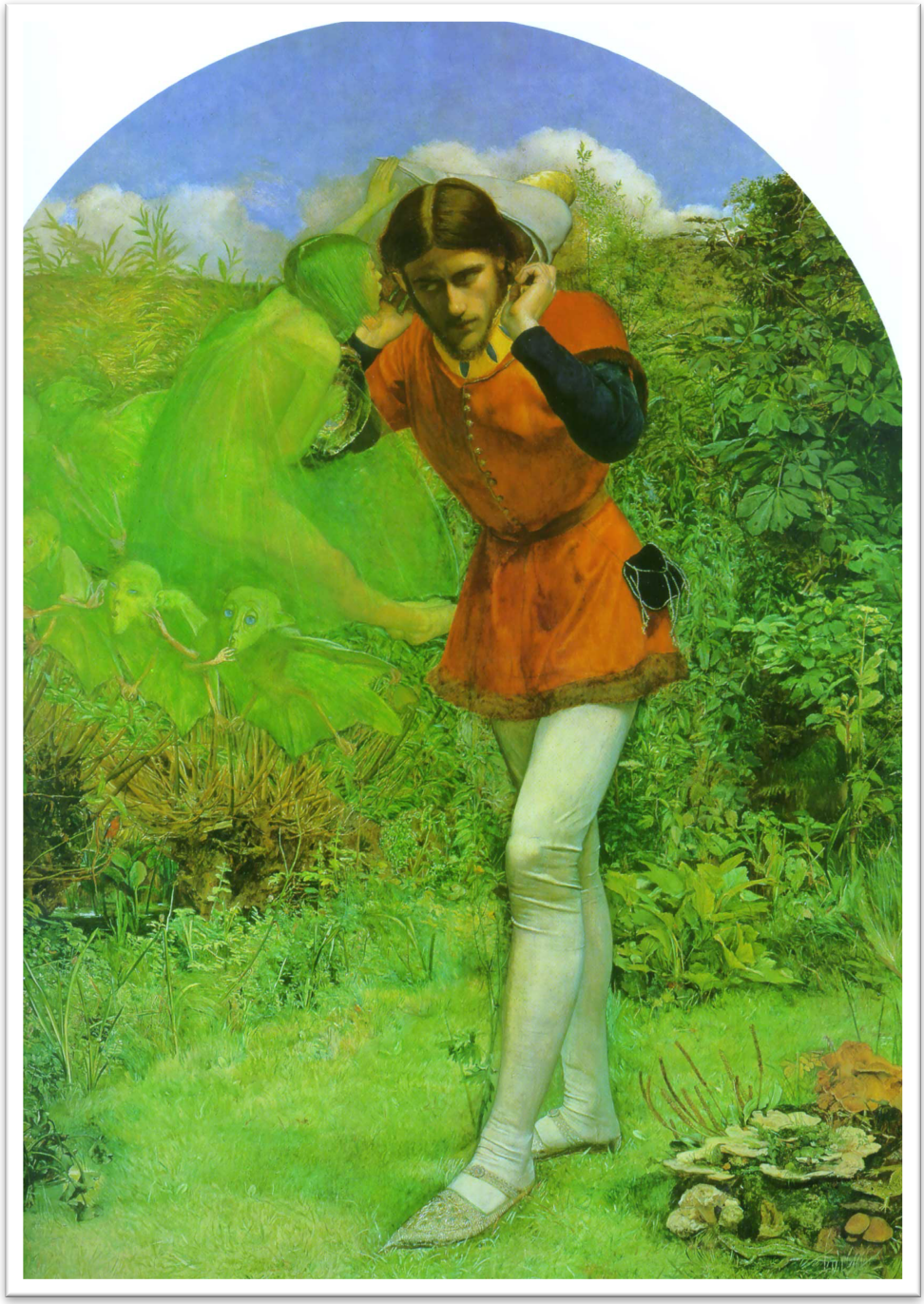

Figure 10 John Everett Millais, *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1849-50), Private Collection.

Figure 11 'Ferdinand and Ariel', illustration by Kenny Meadows in *The Works of Shakespeare revised from the best authorities with a memoir, and essay on his genius, by Barry Cornwall: and, annotations and introductory remarks on the plays, by distinguished writers: illustrated with engravings on wood, from designs by Kenny Meadows* Vol. I (1843; London: William S. Orr and Co., 1846), p. 12.

On the face of it, both images are entirely different: one is a full colour painting, the other a black and white wood engraved book illustration. What caught my eye, however, was how both artists depicted Ariel as malevolent and used other fairy characters to promote this malevolence. In Meadows' illustration, Ferdinand, who is depicted in 'medium close-up', to use film terminology, is surrounded by fairies and cherubs, including Ariel who stares rather menacingly at him. Behind Ferdinand's right shoulder there are two naked women playing the harp. They are, also, presumably fairies, but whereas Meadows usually depicts fairies as cherubs with wings, these characters appear as fully formed women which gives the scene a strange

eroticism. To Ferdinand's left is Meadows' more typical depiction of fairies. These cherubs are playing music and gleefully flying around. In Millais' reading of the scene, we again have Ferdinand, surrounded by Ariel and other supernatural beings. He is also now depicted as much more three-dimensional and in full length: where Meadows used a 'medium close-up', Millais uses a 'master shot'. The effect of this allows Millais to paint a lush green landscape behind Ferdinand, thus giving the scene an unnerving sense of realism. It also distances us from the character of Ferdinand. The colour green is then used to paint Ariel to show that the spirit is invisible and chameleon-like as it is the same colour as the landscape.

Millais' interpretation of *The Tempest* is not set on a desert island but somewhere in rural England and, as such, our relationship to the painting has less to do with Shakespeare and his characters as with our own experience of the English countryside. Meadows' interpretation, by contrast, is firmly anchored (quite literally) within the text of Shakespeare's play and we cannot help but read it within that context. Millais painting, however, removed from the textual moorings that secures Meadows' illustration to Shakespeare's text, allows us to imagine ourselves in that situation: how would we react if we were walking in a field in England and we started to hear mysterious singing? It is important to note that neither interpretation or medium is 'better' but that both media construct an entirely different viewing experience and our responses are reflected in that. In short, our response to the same Shakespearean scene is so radically different because of the specificity of illustration and painting: we experience the book illustration within a complex

web of words and images where other illustrations appear both before and after it. This is not to say that the illustration is *defined* by the textual (illustrators add their own interpretations to the text, as Gilbert's illustration suggest), but that our encounter with it is more *explicitly* textual than our encounter with Millais' painting,

The Archive, then, allows us to read images interpictorially across different media and to ask ourselves what the differences are between those media. It also allows us to explore ideas of influence. Meadows' depiction of Ariel and Ariel's attendant fairies is so uniquely weird that I contend that Millais could not have helped but been influenced by Meadows' work in creating his green malevolent Ariel and fairies. Furthermore, Meadows might also have given Millais the idea of including in his painting the fairies themselves. Meadows' depiction of the scene, with the fairies flying around Ferdinand, is the first illustration I can find where this is the case. William Holman Hunt has praised Millais' originality in the painting:

> The exhibition world was full of pictures of fairies and attendant spirits, and without exception we may see that these were all conceived as graceful human pigmies. Millais, at one burst, treated them as elfin creatures, strange shapes such as might lurk away in the shady groves and be blown about over the surface of a mere, making the wanderer

> wonder whether the sounds they made were anything more than the figments of his own brain.[4]

This is, however, not quite true. While Meadows' Shakespearean work was never part of the 'exhibition world', a quick glance through the Archive at Meadows' illustrations of *The Tempest* reveals that he was treating 'fairies and attendant spirits' as 'elfin creatures' and 'strange shapes' about a decade before Millais (figure 12).

[4] William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 Vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1905), I, p. 399.

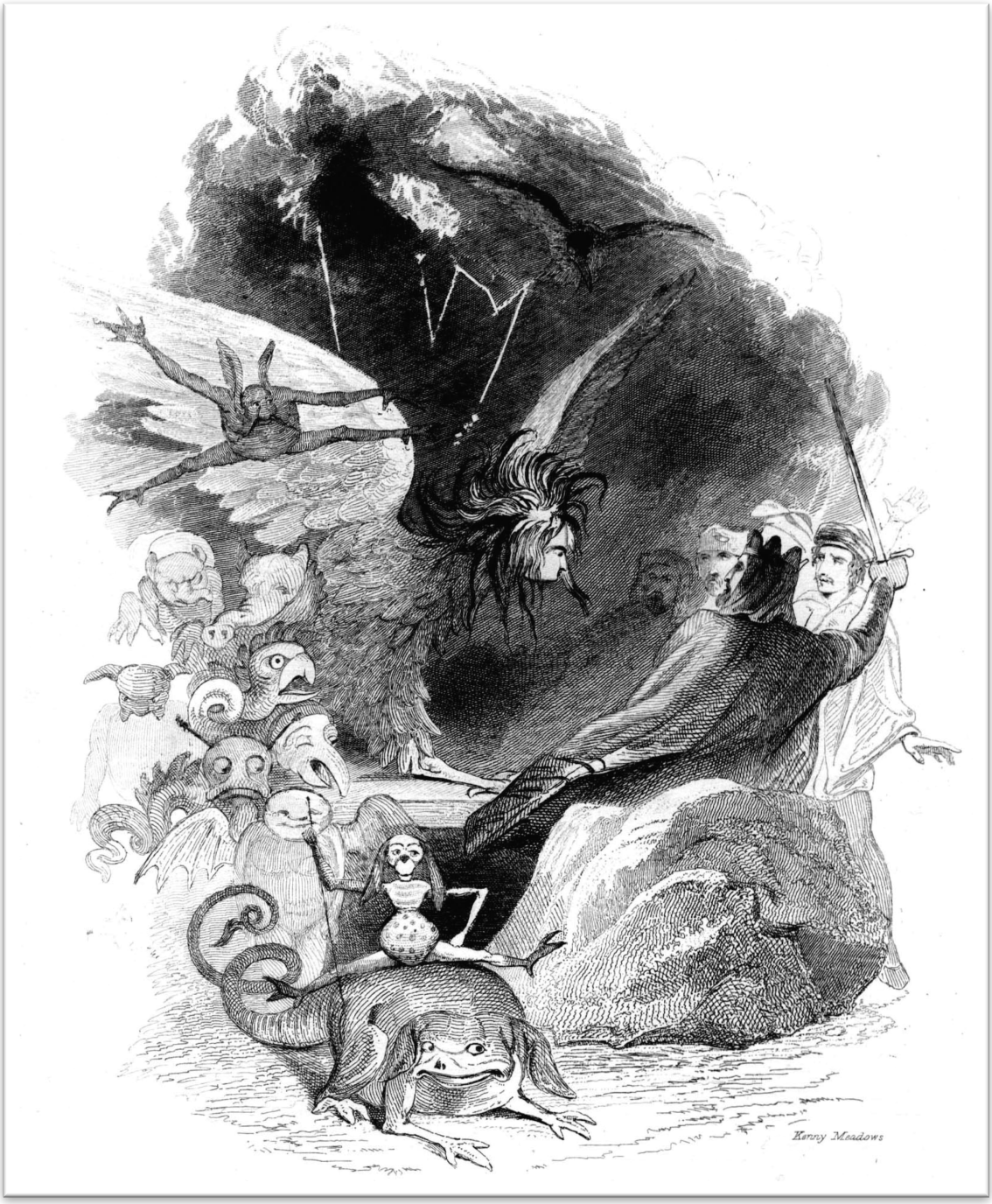

Figure 12 'The Tempest Full Page Introductory Illustration', illustration by Kenny Meadows in *The Works of Shakespeare revised from the best authorities with a memoir, and essay on his genius, by Barry Cornwall: and, annotations and introductory remarks on the plays, by distinguished writers: illustrated with engravings on wood, from designs by Kenny Meadows* Vol. I (1843; London: William S. Orr and Co., 1846), p. 4.

The Archive, of course, also allows us to see whether, in turn, Millais' painting went on to influence Shakespeare illustration. Gilbert is another artist who depicts the scene where Ariel sings to Ferdinand (figure 13).

Figure 13 'Ferdinand and Ariel', illustration by John Gilbert in *The Works of Shakespeare. Edited by Howard Staunton; The Illustrations by John Gilbert; Engraved by the Dalziel Brothers* Vol. III (1858-60; London: George Routledge and Sons, 1865-67), p.15.

It is, to be frank, a rather boring, if not downright *bad* illustration. Ferdinand walks across a rocky landscape while a non-threatening Ariel and four cherubic fairies sing and play music. Everything here is stilted and static: there is a real absence of animation in all the characters and it certainly lacks the dangerous thrill of Meadows' or Millais' work.

Is it possible to detect any influence of Millais' painting on this illustration? We could say that because Ferdinand's whole body is depicted

and Ariel is present with the attendant fairies then Millais' painting must have had some influence. More interestingly, perhaps, I wonder if the illustration is so stilted because Gilbert was more than aware of Millais' painting and this anxiety of influence meant that Gilbert ended up producing a rather poor illustration. We will never know, but investigating ideas of influence from a single Shakespeare scene is a fruitful way of exploring the potential of the Archive.

The illustration of this scene by H.C Selous, however, *was* clearly influenced by Millais and, perhaps to a lesser extent, by Arthur Hughes' painting *Ophelia* (figures 14 and 15).

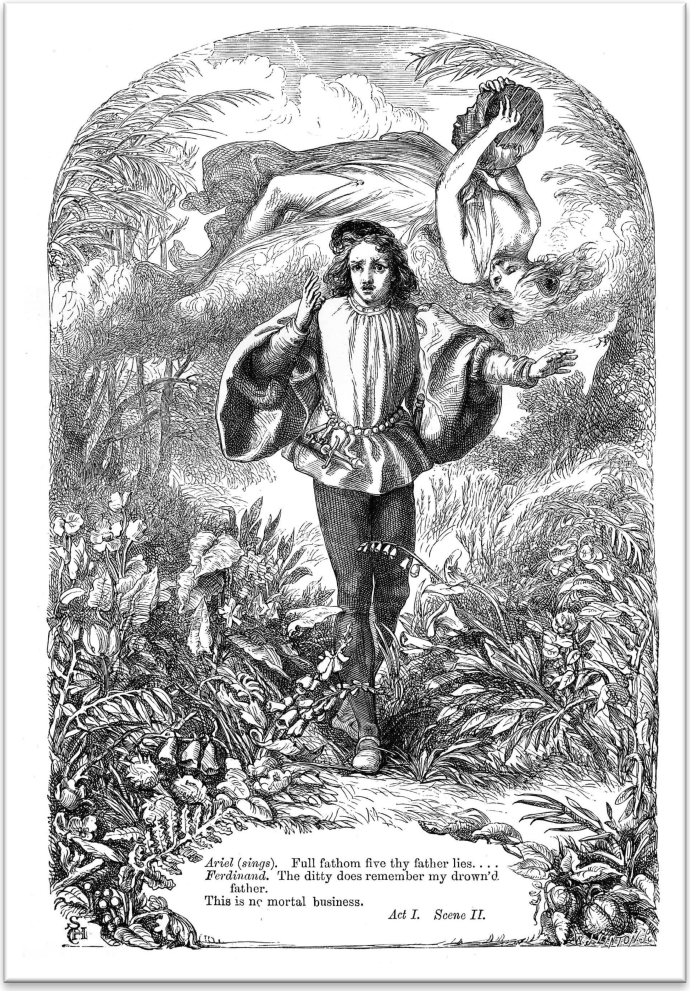

Figure 14 'Ferdinand and Ariel', illustration by H. C. Selous in *Cassell's Illlustrated Shakespeare, The Plays of Shakespeare, Edited and Annotated by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke*, Part 1/35 (London: Paris and Melbourne: Cassell & Company, Limited, [1864-68?]), p. 13.

Figure 15 Arthur Hughes, *Ophelia* (1852), Manchester City Art Gallery.

In Selous' full-page illustration, Ferdinand's whole body is depicted in full as he walks through an overgrown landscape covered with flora and fauna. He is, compositionally, the central figure in the image, and, as he directly stares out from the page, he urges us, as observers, to help him understand the situation he finds himself in and thus implicates us within this narrative. Flying above him, a womanly Ariel plays a harp, her body arched in parallel with the top line of the illustration's 'frame'. Ariel, unlike Meadows' and Millais' more unusual readings of the character, is a far more traditional Victorian interpretation: there is nothing threating about this 'airy spirit' (I.ii). Despite these differences, however, the influence of Millais' painting on Selous is obvious in the illustrator's decision to set the scene in a landscape filled with flowers, trees and shrubbery, inevitably recalling Millais' painting of the English landscape. Even Selous' decision to depict Ariel as rather benign could be seen as a reaction to the negative criticism Millais faced in his

portrayal of Ariel. Could Selous' illustration be an attempt by the artist to 'better' Millais, taking the parts that he considered were most successful in the painting and remediating them for an illustration? Out of all the illustrations that Selous completed for *The Tempest*, this scene certainly looks as if the most time was spent over it. In both composition and detail, Selous achieves a cohesion of form and content that is striking, as this cohesion is lacking elsewhere in his illustrations from *The Tempest*.

And there is one further link to Millais. Selous' illustrations of *The Tempest*, were engraved by W. J. Linton, who had worked with Millais a few years previously on two illustrations, *The Day-Dream* and *A Dream of Fair Women*, in *The Moxon Tennyson*. The latter poem, *A Dream of Fair Women*, was singled out by the *Art Journal's* review as being 'no means deficient in pictorial beauty' while it praises Linton and his fellow engravers for 'what they have had to do they have done with with their accustomed skill.[5] Linton's 'accustomed skill' is also very clearly on display in his work on Selous' illustration of Ariel singing to Ferdinand: if ever anyone needs an example of how difficult the work of an engraver must have been, I suggest they look closely at this illustration, which is clean, bold and extremely detailed. These detailed lines and the work that must have gone into creating the flora and fauna of this overgrown landscape is extraordinary. And, of course, the Archive, by allowing us to zoom in on the illustration in high resolution, allows us to isolate certain details of the image and appreciate Linton's work even more.

[5] 'Review of *Poems* by Alfred Tennyson', in *Art Journal*, 31 (July 1856), 231.

If we look at the illustrations from Selous' *The Tempest* we can see that Linton has signed his name on two of the illustrations, which happen to be the most detailed and the most interesting in the entire set: the title page and Ariel singing to Ferdinand (figure 16).

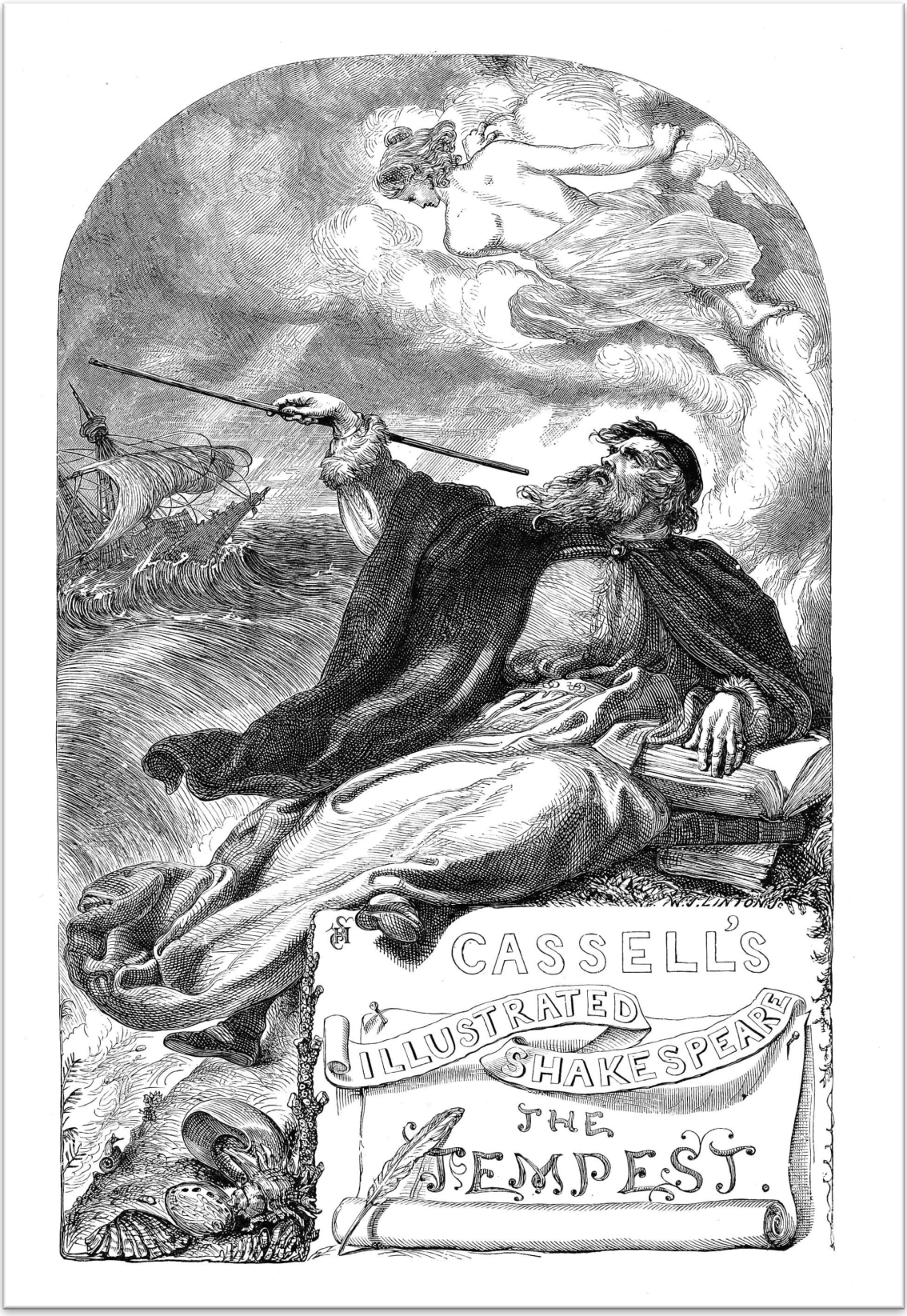

Figure 16 'The Tempest Full Page Introductory Illustration', illustration by H. C. Selous in *Cassell's Illlustrated Shakespeare, The Plays of Shakespeare. Edited and Annotated by Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke,* Part 1/35 (London, Paris and Melbourne: Cassell & Company, Limited [1864-68?]), p.1.

In fact, what marks these two illustrations out from all the others in the set, aside from their quality, is their references to painting. The title page portrays Prospero as a painter whose staff is reminiscent of a paintbrush, and we have already seen how the Ariel singing to Ferdinand illustration directly references Millais's painting of the same scene, but it also recalls, to my mind at least, Arthur Hughes's *Ophelia* from 1848. In that scene a young looking Ophelia sits, as Gertrude reports in Act V of *Hamlet*, upon a willow tree next to a brook making garlands from the weeds and flowers around her. The painting depicts the moment just before Ophelia goes 'clambering' to hang her garland on the tree, the result of which sees her falling into the brook and drowning. Hauntingly, however, what gives Gertrude's account such power and fascination are the moments before Ophelia is drowned:

> Her clothes spread wide,
> And mermaid-like a while they bore her up;
> Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds,
> As one incapable of her own distress,
> Or like a creature native and endued
> Unto that element. But long it could not be
> Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
> Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
> To muddy death.
>
> (4.7. ll. 147-155)

Selous's illustration recalls Hughes's *Ophelia* compositionally and, as such, it makes us aware of a thematic link between *The Tempest* and *Hamlet*. In Selous's illustration, Ferdinand is the central feature of the image. He is depicted straight on, directly in front of the play's reader/observer in a way that is unusual and unique amongst Shakespeare illustration of the period. Similarly, Hughes's *Ophelia* depicts that tragic character centrally in his composition and, also, straight on, in a way that is unusual amongst Shakespeare painting. It is this compositional centrality (and singularity) of both Ferdinand and Ophelia that links the two images (alongside, perhaps, the fact that Ophelia is also depicted in an overgrown and wild landscape). But the images also share a thematic link, that of melancholy drowning. The song 'Full Fathom Five' reports (again, the action is depicted off stage, we are only *told* what has happened) the death of Ferdinand's father by drowning:

> Full fathom five thy father lies;
> Of his bones are coral made;
> Those are pearls that were his eyes;
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.
> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
> Ding-dong.
> Hark! now I hear them — Ding-dong, bell.
>
> (1.2. ll. 399-405)

Both scenes feature songs (Ophelia's chanting of 'old lauds'), drowning, and also some of the most evocative imagery in the Shakespeare canon. Furthermore, both Ferdinand's father and Ophelia are compared to mysterious creatures of the sea: 'those were pearls that were his eyes; / Nothing of him that doth fade / But doth suffer a sea-change/Into something rich and Strange', Ariel sings about Ferdinand's father, while Gertrude describes Ophelia as being 'mermaid-like' and 'like a creature native and endued / Unto that element'. I certainly cannot look at either image now without one image recalling the other, so strong do I find the resonances between them. Meaning, then, has been created by the interpictorial relationship between the illustration and the painting.

The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* allows us not just to research, explore and investigate Victorian Shakespeare Illustration but also, as I have just described, to explore wider Victorian visual culture as well. And, if we feel sometimes that we are drowning in a sea of information, hopefully, the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* will make navigating those oceans a bit easier.

Conclusion

OKDigitalArchive

> Why must writing, especially writing that captures critical thinking, be composed of words? Why not images? Why not sound? Why not objects?
>
> Mark L. Sample[1]

> The forging of a new alliance between words and images may be the biggest challenge of the education system in the years to come.
>
> Christian Vandendorpe[2]

Refractions

When we hold, let us say, a pen in a body of clear water, let us say, a river, a process of refraction means that light will distort the part of the pen that is in

[1] Mark L. Sample, 'What's Wrong with Writing Essays', in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 404-405 (p. 404).
[2] Christian Vandendorpe, *From Papyrus to Hypertext*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 101.

the water, giving the impression that the pen is bent. The speed of light changes when it interacts and travels through different mediums and it is this change in speed that accounts for what we witness as a distortion. When historical artefacts interact with the digital they also become distorted: by changing the medium of representation, in the case of my work from page to screen, the digital artefact becomes something new and its potential to generate meaning is expanded. The light of the past reaches us today in the form of words, images and architecture and it is through the distorting lens that is our present culture that we try to make sense of the past.

We live in a hypermediated world, where the digital is as pervasive to us as water is to fish. What digital technology and over thirty years of poststructuralist theory have allowed us to do is to appreciate not just how much our view of history is mediated, but also how it is also impossible to ever experience the past directly from a position outside of our own cultural and historical moment. The past, like the pen in the water, is always distorted by our own ideologies, values, preoccupations and, indeed, technologies. Catherine Belsey's concept of 'history at the level of the signifier', like Bolter and Gruisin's theory of remediation, is particularly valuable in understanding our relationship to historical texts and has been an essential element in the critical position I have taken in the creation of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*. Belesy writes:

> History at the level of the signifier interprets the residues of the past explicitly from the present, and emphasizes the pastness of the past. It

> takes for granted that we *make* history, which is to say that we make a story which differs from the one contemporaries would have made.[3]

The digital humanities make explicit this making of history, through, quite literally, *making things*.

In the introduction to *Radiant Textuality*, Jerome McGann notes that the 'next generation of literary and aesthetic theorists who will most matter are people who will be at least as involved with *making* things as with writing text'.[4] Why is this the case? Because it is through making (and especially making things digitally) that we can acquire a more holistic understanding of the textual artefact itself and how it *already* exists in a state of mediation. The digital, like a prism with light, breaks up artefacts into their component parts, and in the creation of a digital archive we are challenged to reassemble those parts back together to make a coherent whole. Or at least something that gives the impression of cohesiveness, because archives, digital or 'physical', are always incomplete, always waiting to be added to. Nevertheless, archives give the impression of cohesiveness through the way they are structured and it is this structure that allows us to make sense *of them*. By examining those component parts in turn and in isolation, whether they are images or words, we generate knowledge and the medium of the digital archive challenges us to structure this knowledge. We make things so that things can make sense to us.

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[3] Catherine Belsey, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 9.
[4] McGann, *Radiant Textuality*, p. 19.

The *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* creates meaning through what I have called 'The Differance Engine', the grid-like interface that displays all the search results for any given query. A search for 'Falstaff', will bring up within that grid all the images in the archive that I have tagged as that character. It allows images that have been separated by both time and space – either by being on different pages of the same edition, or by being created by a different illustrator in a different edition – to be compared and contrasted in a way that hitherto would have involved a trip to a special research library and much time and labour spent searching for all the images of that character.

The bespoke nature of this doctoral project has meant that I've been able to single-handedly curate, digitise and design the illustrations contained in *VISA*. Working with a relatively small closed corpus of images has allowed me to tag and add metadata to every image. It is this process of *making* that has allowed me to gain this insight into Victorian illustrated Shakespeare.

In fact, this entire project has not just expanded what we can now do with Victorian illustrated Shakespeare, but it has also expanded my own understanding of what knowledge is and the problems with how that knowledge is accredited and recognised in both society and academically. Working on a digital humanities project, from my experience, means that you begin to question the very basis upon which the modern university is founded: the written word. As Johanna Drucker makes clear in *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*, 'the bias against visual forms of knowledge

production is longstanding in our culture. Logocentric and numero-centric attitudes prevail.'[5] And, as Mark L. Sample writes:

> I have become increasingly disillusioned with the traditional student paper. Just as the only thing a standardized test measures is how well a student can take a standardized test, the only thing an essay measures is how well a student can conform to the rigid thesis/defense model that, in the hands of novice scholars, eliminates complexity, ambiguity, and most traces of critical thinking.[6]

Like Turing's Imitation Game, where a computer only has to give the impression of, or only has to imitate, understanding to 'win', the way universities function, from the undergraduate essay to the emeritus professor writing in a prestigious journal, is one based on imitation and emulation. Ironically, much of this copying also has to do with how the written word *looks* when we submit a piece of work: we look at a piece of academic writing and if we see paragraphs that are indented and it has footnotes then we make an assumption that this is somehow 'right', and the way things should be. But what about other and perhaps more intellectually rewarding approaches?

Last year, Harvard University Press published *Unflattening* by Nick Sousanis,[7] a piece of scholarly work expressed in the form of a graphic novel

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[5] Johanna Drucker, *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 16.
[6] Mark L. Sample, 'What's Wrong with Writing Essays', p. 404.
[7] Nick Sousanis, *Unflattening* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).

(or 'comics' form, as Sousanis prefers).[8] That happened to be Sousanis' doctoral dissertation. What makes *Unflattening* such a powerful and interesting intervention into the current discussion about the importance of making things in the digital humanities is that the *form*, the very medium in which Sousanis communicates his ideas, helps him to create and articulate his argument. *Unflattening* is a 'comic' about the interplay between word and image and new ways of thinking *using* words and images. As Sousanis comments:

> The book is very much an argument that we make sense of the world in ways beyond text—teaching and learning shouldn't be restricted to that narrow band […] *Unflattening*—both the book and the concept—is talking about multimodality, about interdisciplinarity, about image-text, it's both public and scholarly.[9]

Unflattening begins with rows and rows of identikit, faceless figures pushed along a conveyer belt before they are, as Sousanis' captions say, 'Squeezed into the same slots' and where 'What comes out is interchangeable … Standardized'. These figures have been 'reduced to the terms of the universe'.[10] Sadly, these figures are also reminiscent of the postgraduates working in their shared office space in my department: they sit row upon row,

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[8] Sousanis quoted in Pedro Moura 'Interview: Nick Sousanis', *The Comics Alternative* (March 31, 2016) <http://comicsalternative.com/interview-nick-sousanis> [accessed on 20 April 2016]
[9] Sousanis quoted in Timothy Hodler 'Thinking Through Images: An Interview with Nick Sousanis', *The Paris Review* (July 20, 2015) <http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/07/20/thinking-through-images-an-interview-with-nick-sousanis> [accessed on 20 April 2012].
[10] Sousanis, *Unflattening*, p. 13.

simulacra of each other and the senior members of staff they try to emulate, staring at their screens in faux-intellectual seriousness and enforced silence as if they had never once experienced the sheer joy and exhilaration of intellectual inquiry.

What Sousanis calls *Unflattening*, then, is what I've called, in relation to my own project, 'The Illustration Game'. It is a new way of doing research that 'unflattens' thinking: it is, as Sousanis writes, 'about multimodality, about interdisciplinarity, about image-text' and it is 'both public and scholarly'. It is about doing things differently so we see things differently. It is about using illustration as a medium to interrogate the digital and the digital as a medium to interrogate illustration. It foregrounds the visual as well as play, imagination, creativity and curiousity. Above all, the game treats history and knowledge, like Catherine Belsey says above, as something we explicitly interpret and make from the present. A special collections archive is no more 'neutral' or free of 'ideology' than a digital one, but we have naturalised (and romanticised) the 'physical' archive experience so much that we believe if an archive does not contain certain signifiers then it is somehow not valid. *Not real*. *Not authentic.* The digital archive does not supplant the book, or the physical archive, but co-exists alongside it. It augments and is in communication with the 'physical' archive and, as such, opens up a new space for knowledge creation. By creating a digital archive, the maker/curator/designer becomes 'unflattened' and begins to understand that archives, and hence, perhaps, knowledge itself are just cultural constructions.

If we look, architecturally, at the central archive in Shakespeare research, the Folger Library in Washington, this becomes all too apparent. Just as 'Pillars Coffee Shop and Restaurant in Cardiff' constructs a viewer in a certain way in relation to its Shakespearean material so does the Folger. In *Collecting Shakespeare: The Story of Henry and Emily Folger*, Stephen H. Grant recounts how the Folger Library came to be created, but what is particularly interesting is how the founders faced very similar challenges that I faced in creating *VISA*.[11] Grant informs us of how the Folgers were unsure what to name the library (Folger Shakespeare Foundation?), and when they did decide to name the building the 'Folger Shakespeare Library', they had to think about different font sizes for the name to be engraved on the façade of the building. The Folgers wanted 'Folger' to be smaller than 'Shakespeare Library' but the architects decided to make 'Folger' and 'Library' the same size, whilst 'Shakespeare', as the middle and most significant word of the three, was made larger.[12] All of which creates meaning. Even the decision to build the Library in Washington D.C, on Capitol Hill, is symbolically significant. Because of its position, the library is not just near the seat of government, but also the seat of government of the 'free world', the library and 'Shakespeare' becomes synonymous with that institution and that institution, in turn, gains a certain cultural capital and legitimacy by being in close proximity to the world's largest Shakespeare Library.

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[11] Stephen H. Grant, *Collecting Shakespeare: The Story of Henry and Emily Folger* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).
[12] Grant, *Collecting Shakespeare*, p. 147.

Even more revealing is how the Folgers initially wanted to construct an Elizabethan building to house the library. Apparently, Folger was of the view that 'if it was Shakespearean, or of Shakespeare's era, it was right'.[13] Again, we witness the concept of 'authenticity' and a desire for origins when it comes to Shakespeare. The Folgers were persuaded from this design for the exterior of the building, but the architects encouraged them to envision an Elizabethan interior instead. As it stands today, the Folger Library, is a powerful combination of the past and the present, just like a digital archive. And, just as I set out with *VISA* to create simplicity from complexity, so did the architects of the Folger Library. They wanted 'a simple, modern Grecian façade of white Georgian marble' with ornamentation kept to a minimum.[14]

Thinking about architecture and the digital in this way helps us to understand what it is we do when we construct a digital archive. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays in Virtual and Real Space*, Elizabeth Grosz poses the question, 'What does the concept of cyberspace offer architecture?'[15] I would like to switch that question around: 'what does the concept of architecture offer cyberspace?' Instead of thinking of a digital archive as simply a place (a repository) where we upload digitised material (as if that is ever sufficient), thinking of the digital archive in terms of architecture, allows us to reconceive digital archives as more akin to a gallery or a museum.

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[13] Grant, *Collecting Shakespeare*, p. 147.
[14] Grant, *Collecting Shakespeare*, pp. 147-148.
[15] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Massachussetts: MIT Press, 2001), p. 86.

Just as we are beginning to understand this new way of perceiving and creating such digital archives, museums themselves are becoming more and more influenced and challenged by the digital. As Jenny Kidd asserts of current museum practice:

> What, for example, does it mean for an institution to have 20 Facebook likes, or 20,000? […] the ways we create, distribute, access and assess information are changing, with new ways of managing knowledge creation and information sharing; mechanisms like wikis and tagging are becoming more mainstream.[16]

The debates across the museum sector, then, are evidently very similar to those taking place in the digital humanities: like the Victorians before us, we are now faced once more with an intellectual environment in which knowledge and how we create and access it is rapidly changing. The digital humanities opens up these parallels between different institutions (the University, the Museum, the Art Gallery), and, in so doing, creates a site in which English Literature Departments and Museums, for example, can be in constructive communication with each other. The next step for the digital humanities, I suggest, is for us to begin these dialogues and to create important and lasting work that can shape our culture in the future.

The real reason, McGann argues, that scholars of the future will be just as concerned with making things as with writing text is because those

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[16] Jenny Kidd, *Museums in the New Mediascape: Transmedia, Participation, Ethics* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 5.

scholars have become, or are in the process, of becoming unflattend. They understand that knowledge is not just confined to text but can often be communicated more effectively through other media. They see knowledge as a space where 'interdisciplinarity' is not the exception, but the standard way of doing research. By opening up channels of discussion with people working in museums and galleries, we have the chance to fulfill the true meaning of 'university', which comes form the Latin meaning 'the whole'.[17]

And what about the thesis itself? This very document? Well, perhaps, in the future, we should stop thinking about the thesis as a *document* merely used to pass a viva and we should begin to unflatten that process, paying greater heed to typography, colour and the way we can enhance meaning though visual means on the page itself. It is one aspect of this thesis that I wish I had explored further, perhaps playing around with the form of the actual written component of the thesis. In fact, at one point, I wanted to create something much more akin to the 'hypermediated' style of *Wired* magazine. As it stands, I've only gone as far as using the font 'Helvetica' and the colour blue on the chapter titles to create visual consistency between *VISA* and this piece of work. Visually, then, the two aspects of my doctoral project are connected, creating a visual entwinement between theory and practice. But there is one more pertinent aspect to to the chapter headings. In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong describes how 'pre-print manuscripts commonly ran words together', and this is the reason why all the chapter headings and the

[17] *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], 'university', <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/university> [accessed 20 April 2016].

title of this work also run together: to remind us that even writing itself is a technology and subject to change.[18]

As our play is nearly over and 'The Illustration Game' has come to an end, why not conclude where Blake began, with the introductory poem from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*? In the poem Blake writes that 'I made a rural pen, / And I stain'd the water clear'.[19] The underlying argument of this project has been that we can all make our own 'rural' pens, that is, we can take technology that is not particularly sophisticated or expensive, and with passion, imagination and curiosity, we can create work that is interesting and engaging. The digital currents that are flowing through our lives and what this pervasive stream of bits and bytes actually means for humanity is the biggest question we should be exploring in the humanities presently. And who knows where such an exploration will lead us? Maybe, as Shakespeare wrote in *The Winter's Tale,* 'To unpathed waters, undreamed shores' … (4.4 l. 577).

[18] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 119.
[19] William Blake, 'Introduction', in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), (4: ll. 17-18).

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended—
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.

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